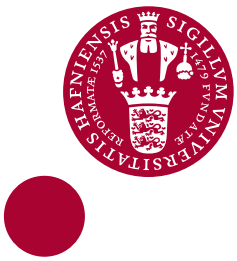

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The spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development in the Canadian North.

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PhD Thesis

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Not there and (not) yet.

The spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development in the Canadian North.

Supervisor: Frank Sejersen

Submitted: 28 November, 2018

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Acknowledgements

Many researchers, when interrogated on the origin of their scholarly interests, would be able to recall a couple of key moments in their lives - an encounter, a university class or a travel - which have, somehow, sparked their curiosity, and led them to pursue a path or to lay out a new one. To me, one of these moments happened in November 2013, when I was an exchange student at the Faculty of Political Science at Aarhus University. Few days before my first trip to Copenhagen, I sent a mail to the inbox of the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), a leading NGO in the field of indigenous rights located in the Danish capital. To my great surprise, Kathrin Wessendorf, one of their coordinators, replied to my mail and agreed to meet me at her office. Needless to say, that meeting turned out to be extremely significant, as it did not only open up a whole new world for me, but pointed me towards a direction - North - which, since then, I would just keep following.

Over the past three years, many people have contributed to this work, whether with their insightful comments and perspectives or their endless patience and support.

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Summary

Although the discussion on the social and environmental impacts of energy development in the Arctic is rapidly growing in many countries, the spatial and temporal significance of this development is not yet fully acknowledged.

The PhD thesis *Not there and (not) yet. The spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development in the Canadian North* aims at exploring the impacts of hydrocarbon exploration and extraction on the negotiation of geographies, rights and identities in the North of Canada over the last fifty years. By combining theoretical inputs from a variety of disciplines, the project investigates the spatial and temporal dynamics of Canadian energy development, i.e. how the different energy stakeholders, and particularly aboriginal people, both produce and inhabit continuously changing energy landscapes, and how they expect, envision and anticipate multiple and potentially contrasting energy futures.

In this regard, the failed construction of a natural gas pipeline, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline (1974-2017), is chosen as a main case study in order to show how - although *not there*, *not yet*, and probably, *not anymore* - this kind of megaprojects manages to trigger a series of long-lasting and long-distance transformations, affecting people's behaviors, memories and narratives across time and space. Through the lens of the Dene testimonies presented in two separate and particularly extensive rounds of community hearings – the Berger Inquiry (1974-1977) and the Joint Review Panel hearings (2006-2007) – aboriginal perceptions, experiences and productions of space and time are explored, and, together with them, also the power relations underpinning space-time engagements.

Ultimately, the aim of this research is to contribute to the study of energy development and extractivism, currently developing at great speed in many scholarly and non-scholarly environments. Differently from much of the existing literature, the project approaches places, people and events "relationally", i.e. as if these were in a constant interaction and interrelation with each other, and in a process of becoming, rather than something to be taken for granted.

Dansk Resumé

På trods af at diskussionerne om de sociale og miljømæssige påvirkninger af energieftersøgning og –udvikling i Arktis er omsiggribende i mange lande, så er de rumlige og tidslige betydninger af en sådan udvikling endnu ikke helt anerkendt.

Ph.D. afhandlingen *Not there and (not) yet. The spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development in the Canadian North* har til formål, at undersøge de påvirkninger efterforskning og udvikling af olie og gas har haft på forhandlinger af geografier, rettigheder og identiteter i det nordlige Canada igennem de sidste 50 år. Ved at inddrage en række teoretiske perspektiver fra forskellige fagdiscipliner undersøger projektet de rumlige og tidslige dynamikker, som er knyttet til den canadiske energiudvikling, herunder hvorledes forskellige energiinteressenter – specielt indfødte folk – både producerer og bebor forskellige og kontinuerligt foranderlige energilandskaber, samt hvorledes de forventer, forestiller sig og foregriber multible og potentielt modstridende energifremtider.

Afhandlingens primære case er den mislykkede konstruktion af gasledningen Mackenzie Valley Pipeline (1974-2017). Denne case er valgt med det formål at undersøge, hvorledes et sådant megaprojekt på trods af *ikke at være der – endnu* – og måske *aldrig nogensinde* alligevel formår at igangsætte en serie af langtrækkende og langvarige transformationer, som påvirker folks praksisser, erindringer, og narrativer på tværs af tid og rum. Denefolkets vidnesbyrd i de omfattende Berger høringer (1974-1977) og senere i Joint Review Panel høringerne (2006-2007) vil blive analyseret med henblik på at undersøge Denefolkets forståelser af, erfaringer med og produktionen af rum og tid, og hvorledes disse er sammenkoblet med magtrelationer, der understøtter rum-tid engagementer.

Projektets forskning ønsker at bidrage til det voksende videnskabelige felt, der fokuserer på energiudvikling og energiudnyttelse (*extractivism),* og som får større og større opmærksomhed både inden for og uden for videnskabelige kredse. Projektet adskiller sig fra andre undersøgelser inden for feltet, ved at forstå steder, folk og begivenheder som relationelt konstitueret, hvilket betyder at de ikke kan tages for givet, men altid er i en konstant interaktion og relation til hinanden i en løbende skabelsesproces.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

1.1. Not there and not yet: engaging with absence

The Arctic is often portrayed as a region of abundant natural resources. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (2000), twenty-five percent of world undiscovered oil and gas reserves are to be found in this area, most of them offshore. Yet, while resource extraction is still encouraged in many Arctic countries, including Canada, uncertainties about the financial and technical viability, the long-term prospects, and, more recently, the social and environmental sustainability of oil and gas development are omnipresent. Extractive projects are thus often informed by "absences", either because they trigger anticipatory strategies by government, industry and local residents even before any kind of development has concretely taken place or simply because they remain unrealized. As I intend to discuss in this thesis, however, the different absences pervading energy infrastructure development in the Arctic are in no way to be interpreted as empty or devoid of any meaning, and rather, as significant and productive as the multiple "presences" they are inherently embedded with. In this perspective, absence, which can be described 'as an ambiguous interrelation between what is there and what is not' (Bille et al., 2010, p. 4), is seen as an agentive force (Hetherington, 2004), capable of producing very concrete effects on people's practices, relations and identities. While absences - especially infrastructural ones - are mostly addressed in connection with the material world (Barry, 2013; Haines, 2018), they also extend, as I will argue, beyond the latter, thus encompassing people's experiences, perceptions and aspirations. While it is not my intention to dwell on the vast literature on absence spanning several disciplines[1], I nevertheless like to consider "absence" a red thread weaving through this work, and connecting - as well as affecting - many of the themes, the places and the people here addressed. In this sense, in the resource-rich Canadian North, to be - or to be perceived as - absent are not only the infrastructures (such as in the case of not-yet-built pipelines or abandoned oil fields), but a whole complex of non-material elements as well (such as rights, recognition, hope, information, etc.).

[1] The various disciplines engaging with the notion of absence include archeology (Buchli and Lucas, 2001; Fowles, 2010; Fowles and Heupel, 2013; Owen, 2015; Sørensen, 2010), anthropology (Bille et al., 2010; Højer, 2009), religion (Dalferth, 2009; Dunn, 2004) and political geography (Gibson et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2012).

As the title of this work suggests, I am particularly interested in exploring the *spatio-temporal* dimensions of absence, i.e. the various forms of missing - e.g. losses, gaps and omissions - which underpin spatial and temporal imaginations, perceptions and practices in the context of resource extraction. In this regard, within my study of oil and gas development in the Canadian North, I have traced the "presence of absence" (Agamben and Heller-Roazen, 1999) multiple times, including in the production and circulation of spatial imaginaries, in the persistent silencing of indigenous voices or in the constant and vivid manifestation of future expectations and past histories in the present. In connection with all these examples, spatio-temporal absence emerges as a pivotal element of my own case study, namely a natural gas pipeline which is not there yet and, most likely, will never be: the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline[2] (1972-2017).

According to a recent article from the New York Times (Kujawinski, 2018), all major Canadian pipeline projects 'are either delayed or dead'. Acknowledging this absence encourages then to move beyond the material, and explore what kind of responses, opportunities and losses are generated by unrealized extractive endeavors. Drawing upon existing studies on 'imagined' (Haines, 2018) and 'unbuilt' (Peyton, 2017) projects, the aim of this work is to investigate the spatial and temporal dynamics - e.g. frontier formation, anticipation, reaction, etc. - triggered by untapped hydrocarbon resources and not-yet-built energy infrastructures, and while doing so, to expose the several *other* absences characterizing processes of energy development.

Not there and (not) yet: deconstructing the title

The choice of the title stems from a wish to reflect the thesis' multiple engagements with questions of space and time, and can thus be interpreted as it follows:

a) *Not there*

The production of spatial imaginaries and identities is a practice inherently embedded both with nationalism (Anderson, 2006; Winichakul, 1994), and with processes of resource extraction and exploitation (Bakker and Bridge, 2006; Barney, 2017; Magrin and Perrier-Bruslé, 2011). In the case of Canadian oil and gas development, I observe how cartographic representations of the

[2] From here, I will mostly refer to the project through the abbreviation MVP.

North of the country often envision the North as a (socially empty) space of opportunity, extractivism and shifting potentiality. These maps, and the imaginaries they support, are not only informed by multiple absences, but strategically maintain the latter in order to fuel expectation and enthusiasm. Similarly, regardless of their actual construction, energy/extractive infrastructures such as pipelines, as soon as officially proposed or even simply discussed, suddenly materialize in the plans and in the visions of potential beneficiaries and opponents, thus prompting some kind of reaction. In this sense, one can say that these infrastructures are already there, without being there yet. Although lying in the liminal and promissory space of imagination and potentiality, I argue that pipelines are nevertheless capable to produce very concrete (socio-spatial) effects. They redesign borders, prompt people to move from one place to another, gather the interests of stakeholders living miles away from the prospected site of development, and encourage a general rethinking and rescaling of space, identities and power relations.

b) ***Not yet***

What different energy projects have in common is that they all envision a future which, although not materialized yet, feels extremely real and tangible in its 'present-ness' (Bryant, 2016). By projecting a wide range of outcomes - i.e. jobs, rights, economic development, environmental devastation or all at once - these projects can create expectations of the future, and thus direct actions and aspirations in the present. Regardless of where it takes place, oil and gas exploration, in particular, is often informed by a deep sense of urgency, which, accordingly, prompts those involved in this development to adopt specific temporal and affective orientations, such as anticipation (Weszkalnys, 2014). Anticipation materializes as a complex, hectic and escalating process which is traceable in the huge number of documents, evidences and regulations produced during the negotiation of megaprojects. At the same time, however, as I point out in the case of the MVP, the pipeline's temporal absence (or presence) is perceived and approached through a variety of dispositions both deeply interwoven with and somehow diverging from anticipation. In this sense, while aboriginal supporters of the project claim the control of anticipation by identifying the latter with a - inherently Native - quality of resilience, others denounce the consequences of past and present anticipatory and reactive strategies, thus manifesting, together with doubts and suspicions, an increasing degree of disillusionment towards the future.

c) *And (…) yet*

Without the word "not" in brackets, the title contains a twist. The adverb "yet", here to be understood as synonym of "nevertheless" or "however", alludes to the mood of expectation and anxiety generated by several proposed energy projects in the Arctic. Regardless of whether these have eventually become a reality or not, there has often been, especially among Northern residents, a deeper awareness of the inevitability and imminence of change. Suspended between an ever changing present and a not-yet-materialized future, these people have thus been continuously urged to engage with, respond and adapt to extractive infrastructures, *in spite of*, or more properly, *because of* their absence. In this sense, what I attempt to show throughout this thesis is how, although ultimately unbuilt, energy megaprojects - such as the MVP - become *nevertheless* capable of deeply affecting choices, memories and narratives across time and space.

1.2. Tracing and exploring energy entanglements

> Gas pipelines are not made of "gas", but rather of steel tubing, pumping, stations, international treaties, Russian Mafiosi, pylons anchored in the permafrost, frostbitten technicians, and Ukrainian politicians (Latour, 2013, p.32).

In the last fifty years, the global energy demand has been constantly rising, bringing major economic, political and social changes, and massively affecting the lives of many all over the world. Especially in the Western countries, energy demand has for long time been tightly linked to the hectic and often uncontrolled extraction of fossil fuels, which has in turn generated a chain of different, yet interconnected effects, whether on environmental and human health, on industrial and agricultural development or, as many have pointed out (Mitchell, 2011; Ryggvik and Kristoffersen, 2015; Szeman and Boyer, 2017; Urry, 2013), on the way states have shaped their domestic and international policies. Increasing global efforts are thus being made today in order to find cleaner alternatives to face current and future energy demands, and, at the same time, in order to facilitate highly urged processes of energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables.

However, before taking a step forward and envisioning a carbon-free future, I believe it is worth to keep reflecting about the past and present dimensions of energy, and to look at how fossil fuels have succeeded in triggering a long series of transformations all over the globe. Whether it is to reach a house in Copenhagen, a ministerial office in St. Petersburg or the headquarters of an NGO in Toronto, energy travels fast, and cuts across multiple and intersecting trajectories. The reason why its flow seems to prevail over national boundaries is that before "being made" energy, fossil fuels are extracted, transported and distributed through a transnational network of complex infrastructures. Such infrastructures, which include pipelines, are here valued beyond their technical features, and rather, approached as socially significant entities which attract (and affect) a large group of diversely positioned people and places - as hinted by anthropologist Bruno Latour (2013) in the quote abovementioned.

In this regard, it is interesting to notice that, while most common definitions of the word 'pipeline' tend to focus on the engineering structure of these technologies, by describing them as lines of pipes with pumps, valves and other devices used to carry liquids and gases (Merriam-Webster, 2015), in other contexts, the same word is employed with a much more dynamic connotation. So, for example, 'an activity, item of information, material, or product, that is between the starting point and the completion point' is according to the Business Dictionary (2015) 'in pipeline'. Unlikely the first more technical definition, what emerges through the second one, as I see it, is an attention towards the process and what lies between 'the starting point' and 'the completion point'. In this understanding, the word 'pipeline' evokes notions of non-linear and possibly uneven development, instead of merely embodying a complete and indisputable result.

In the same way as a pipeline should not always be considered a final or even a visible outcome, I am interested in addressing energy development as a process constantly and variously informed by multiple encounters, conflicts and negotiations. This relational and inevitably contested character of energy is also what makes its study, according to researcher Hanna Lempinen (2014), 'inextricably intriguing'. What I intend to do through this work, then, is not necessarily to disentangle the complexity of energy, but to unravel and explore the subtle and powerful

connections - between people, places and histories - generated by processes of energy development.

1.3. Context: oil and gas development in the Northwest Territories

Which North? A plurality of spatial imaginaries

Through literature, art and politics, multiple and often contrasting ideas of "nordicity" have informed the way Canadians have imagined, defined and understood their Northern regions (Abel and Coates, 2001; Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi, 2011; Grace, 2002; Graham, 1990; Keskitalo, 2005; Shields, 2013). Geopolitically, the "North" is often identified with the area lying above the 60th parallel, while administratively, it refers to the three territories of Yukon, Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut[3]. Besides these, other sub-divisions, based more on cultural and climate parameters, such as 'far north' or 'Arctic' and 'sub-Arctic', are also of common use. In reality, however, as observed by Canadian geographer Rob Shields (2013, p. 171), 'the exact location of any southern boundary of the North is highly debatable', and the different attempts to offer a systematic definition of this area are nothing but a reflection of the 'plurality of ideas of North that are in constant flux [and] yet are persistent over time' (Grace, 2007, p. xii). In fact, rather than a clearly delimited geographical region, the North is 'a zone of indeterminacy' (Shields, 2013, p. 165), 'a state of mind' (Hodgins and Hobbs, 1987, p. 2) or, in other words, a shifting, elusive and yet extremely captivating spatiality, mostly informed by non-Northern perspectives (Cooke, 2016; Kassam, 2001). In this sense, the Canadian North has been imagined and represented in very different ways: as a cold and distant wilderness, as a resource frontier, as a key element for Canadian Arctic sovereignty, and especially over the last decades, as an area of particular environmental concern due to its unique and fragile ecosystems. All these images are somehow linked by an abstract idealization of the "North" as a liminal zone of exceptionalism, promise and national pride, where (Southern) ambitions can be ultimately fulfilled. Therefore, while obviously constituting only partial and restrictive representations of the huge diversity characterizing Canada's Northern territories, each of the spatial imaginaries abovementioned has nonetheless contributed to shaping specific 'patterns of development,

[3] This demarcation is the one favored mostly by federal institutions. In this regard, see for example: Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (2015) 'About the North' (full reference in bibliography).

economic impacts on [Northern] inhabitants, political implications for the nation-state and cultural impacts on Canadian citizens' (Shields, 2013, p. 199).

Out of the different ways of imagining the North of Canada, the one which, I argue, has not only exercised a particularly long-lasting influence on Canadian national identity, but has also deeply informed the economic and political developments occurring in the country's northern regions is the "frontier" (Careless, 1954; Cross, 1970). While I am going to engage more extensively with this concept throughout Chapters 4 and 5, the central argument developed here is that the imagination (and representation) of the Northwest of Canada as a frontier - and, later, as an 'energy frontier' (Nuttall, 2006) - has been consistently used to promote and accelerate processes of resource extraction and exploitation across the Canadian North and particularly, in the NWT.

The Dene of the Northwest Territories

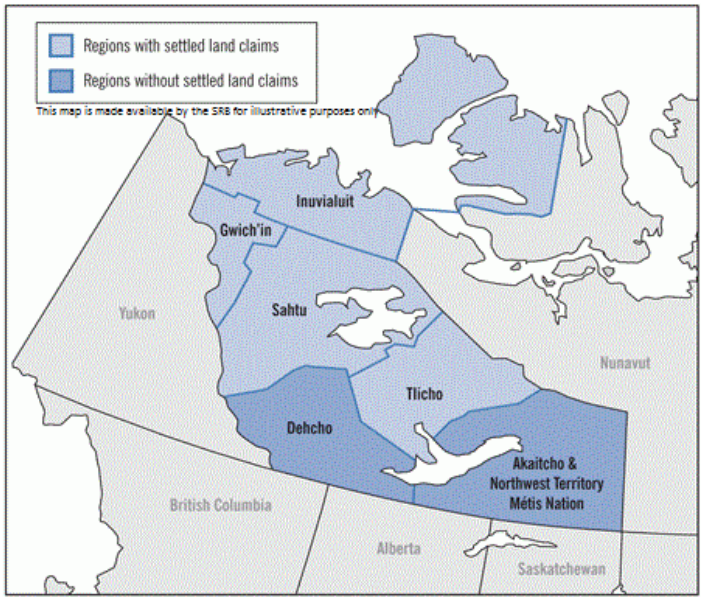

Figure 1. Map of the Northwest Territories and of the settled/unsettled land claims.

The Northwest Territories (NWT) is one of the three federal territories of Canada, encompassing an area of approximately 1,144,000 square kilometers. It includes three regions, namely the Arctic Archipelago, the Arctic mainland and the Mackenzie Valley area. The latter is crossed by the Mackenzie River and its tributaries, and supports a broad range of ecosystems ranging from forests to tundra and wetlands (Berger, 1977, p. xvi-xvii). Besides its rich biodiversity, the

Mackenzie Valley is known for hosting the ancestral lands of a variety of aboriginal groups[4], such as the Inuvialuit (Inuit), the Gwich'in and Sahtu Dene (First Nations) and the Métis.

The majority of the First Nations living in the Mackenzie Valley are the Dene, whose land - *Denendeh* (lit. 'the land of the people') - is today divided into five regions (Coulthard, 2014, p. 54) within the NWT (Figure 1), namely: 1) the Gwich'in Settlement Area[5], the northernmost region which borders the Inuvialuit Settlement Area; 2) the Sahtu Region[6], located south of the Gwich'in territories and west and north of Great Bear Lake; 3) the Dehcho Region[7], bordering Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta, and whose communities, differently from the previous two, have not yet settled their land claim; 4) the Tlicho area[8], east of the Mackenzie River between Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake, and 5) the Akaitcho region[9], south of Great Slave Lake, comprising the lands of the Weledeh and Chipewyan Dene.

The Dene people have witnessed a great amount of changes since the first contacts with European explorers and fur traders in the late seventeenth century (Abel, 2005). In the early 1950s, with the fall of fur prices and a rise in the cost of trade goods, the Dene started to combine more traditional activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping with increasing participation in the wage economy. After the transfer of the administrative center of the NWT from Ottawa to Yellowknife and the establishment of the latter as territorial capital in 1967, the influx of prospectors, oil companies and bureaucrats, and the subsequent building of infrastructures (including roads, mines and oil wells) rose dramatically. At the beginning of 1970s, when the first proposals to build a natural gas pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley were presented, Dene and Métis activists responded with the release of the Dene Declaration (1975), a political document which called for the recognition of Dene nationhood within Canada (Watkins, 1977). Over the following decades, the ambitions, the visions and the claims voiced by the different Dene communities (or by single community members) would sometimes diverge, and lead to a

[4] In Canada, there are three main indigenous groups: the Inuvialuit, the First Nations and the Métis, collectively referred to as 'aboriginal people'.
[5] The Gwich'in Settlement Area includes the communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson.
[6] The Sahtu Region includes the communities of Colville Lake, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita.
[7] The Decho Region includes the communities of Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Sambaa K'e and Wrigley.
[8] This area comprises the communities of Behchokǫ̀, Gamètì , Wekweètì and Whatì. The Tlicho are the last Dene group to have signed a comprehensive land claim and self-government agreement with the Canadian government in 2003.
[9] The Akaitcho Region includes the communities of Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Dettah and Łutselk'e.

great variety of positions and institutional outcomes. Nevertheless, what I hope to draw attention to in this work is Dene's unique contribution not only to the negotiations of the MVP, but to a more nuanced understanding of Northern indigenous narratives, identities and practices. In this regard, the years following the first MVP proposals are also the same years which see the emergence of highly educated and charismatic Dene leaders such as Stephen Kakfwi, Frank T'Seleie and George Erasmus, who, since then, will continue to play a central role in the political life of the NWT.

Before providing a general introduction of the MVP project, I would like to dedicate the next section to historically frame - in a very brief and in no way comprehensive manner[10] - the deep entanglement between indigenous peoples and resource exploitation through Canadian NWT.

(Extr)activism in the NWT: indigenous politics along the pipeline

Although the first accounts of oil seepages in the Mackenzie Valley date back to the 19th century, it is not until the beginning of the 20th century that the NWT started to be at the center of increasing oil and gas exploration. While the discovery of oil in Norman Wells (NWT) in 1920 and the construction of the CANOL pipeline from Norman Wells to Whitehorse (Yukon) between 1943 and 1944 are undoubtedly two key events of Canadian petro-history, both endeavors did not immediately lead to the much-awaited oil boom. In the late 1960s, however, exploration and drilling in the Mackenzie Valley and Delta underwent a sudden acceleration, further intensified after the discovery, in 1968, of a huge reservoir of oil and natural gas beneath Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. At the same time, between 1968 and 1973, different aboriginal groups began to mobilize in the North and to create political organizations such as the Committee on Original Peoples Entitlement (COPE), the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) and the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB).

In these years of (extr)activism and contestation, together with a renewed attention towards indigenous rights, a whole complex of spatialities[11] emerged, as a result of aboriginal recollection of stories, memories and experiences. Previously, this process of transformation has been

[10] A more extensive historical background on the role of indigenous peoples in Canadian oil and gas development will be provided in Chapter 5.
[11] Such as the "Dene nation".

exemplified, for example by indigenous lawyer Thomas Berger (1977), by pointing out the emergence of an indigenous 'homeland' narrative vs. a predominantly Southern 'frontier' one. Yet, in the attempt to move beyond such dichotomous (and potentially restrictive) understandings of Northern spaces and spatial identities, I would rather shed light on the multiple spatialities and territorial configurations[12] resulting from these years of intense mobilization in the NWT. Since 1973, twenty-six comprehensive land claim agreements (or "modern treaties") have been signed between aboriginal peoples and the federal government (Government of Canada, 2015). Out of them, four[13] have been concluded in the NWT: namely, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in 1984, the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in 1992, the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in 1993, and the Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement in 2003[14]. These agreements have not only deeply changed the legal and institutional landscapes of the NWT, but have progressively forged new alliances as well as new divisions among the indigenous groups inhabiting the Mackenzie Valley. It is thus interesting to notice how, while undoubtedly relevant *per se*, many of the transformations taking place over the last decades have occurred in parallel with the negotiation of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline through NWT, thus confirming the profound and yet, often elusive and ambivalent connection between Canadian oil and gas development and Northern indigenous politics.

A case study: the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project

In December 2017, an article appeared on CBC News with the following headline: 'Mackenzie Valley pipeline project officially one for history books' (Strong, 2017). The article reported the decision of Calgary-based petroleum company Imperial Oil to end the joint-venture partnership behind the MVP project due to changes in the North American natural gas market and to increased costs and competition.

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[12] Such as the Sahtu Region or the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

[13] While technically signed in order to officially separate from the NWT, it is also worth to mention the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* and the *Nunavut Act*, both concluded by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and the federal government in 1993. The official separation of Nunavut from NWT took place in 1999.

[14] While the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement all constitute comprehensive land-claim agreements, the Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement is instead a combined comprehensive land claim and self-government agreement. Furthermore, in 2015, one community-based self-government agreement has been completed, although not yet in effect, namely the Delíne Final Self-Government Agreement. For more information regarding land claims settled in the NWT, see: https://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/land-claims [Accessed 3 October, 2018].

Yet, as I suggested in the introduction to this chapter, the MVP's enduring absence should not (or at least not only) be understood in terms of lack of something, but rather, in terms of the multiple "presences" generated by infrastructural absence itself. The fifty years preceding the final decision on the project have in fact been extremely intense, and filled with thousands of pages of documents (e.g. newspaper articles, reports, assessments, plans, maps, etc.), hundreds of hearings held across Northern communities and major cities, major changes in Canadian legislation, and extensive negotiations where promises have been made and different, although often overlapping requests, visions and aspirations have been articulated. While it is absolutely not my intention here to cover the breadth of four decades within the space of a paragraph, I would nevertheless like to offer the reader who is not familiar with the project in question a very brief and condensed timeline.

In the aftermath of the 1973 OPEC oil crisis, two consortia of oil companies - Canadian Arctic Gas Pipelines and Foothills Pipelines - put forward two separate proposals to build a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley. In the first proposal, the one from Canadian Arctic Gas Pipelines, the pipeline route was meant to start in Prudhoe Bay in Alaska, continue across Northern Yukon and the Mackenzie Delta, and finally end in Alberta for a total of 3,860 km. In the second proposal, the one from Foothills Pipelines, the pipeline would instead begin at the Mackenzie Delta and run along the Mackenzie River valley to then end in Alberta, thus covering a much shorter distance. Few months after the two proposals, the Canadian Government established a Royal Commission of Inquiry in order to assess the social, environmental and economic impact of the project on Northern residents. The Inquiry, formally known as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, was conducted by Justice Thomas Berger[15], who visited thirty-five communities along the Mackenzie River Valley as well as major cities, holding a combination of formal and public hearings over the course of two years. In 1977, the Commission issued a report where, among the other things, a 10-year moratorium was recommended on the construction of the pipeline, in order to allow for the settlement of aboriginal land claims. The land-claim settlement

[15] Due to the key role of Judge Berger in collecting testimonies throughout the North, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry is often referred to as the "Berger Inquiry". Throughout the thesis, this will also be my preferred way of referring to the hearings.

process, already started in 1973, continued throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. In the early 2000s, leaders from the Inuvialuit, Sahtu Dene and Gwich'in communities in the NWT formalized their support to a new pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley, thus forming the Aboriginal Pipeline Group (APG). In the same year, a joint venture between Imperial Oil, ConocoPhillips Canada, ExxonMobil Canada and the APG manifested its will to revive the MVP, and thus presented a 16.2 billion proposal called the "Mackenzie Gas Project". In 2004, a Joint Review Panel (JRP), composed by seven members, was officially established in order to evaluate the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the project. At the same time, a National Energy Board (NEB) panel was tasked with evaluating financial and technical aspects. The Joint Review Panel held hearings in twenty-six communities from 2006 to 2007 and released its final report in 2009, endorsing the project, although with several recommendations. The report was thus sent to the NEB which, after conducting a final round of hearings, conditionally approved the Mackenzie Gas Project in 2010. In March 2011, the pipeline was granted federal cabinet approval, and the NEB issued a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, giving its proponents time until 2015 to begin the construction. In the following years, Imperial Oil declared that the cost of the pipeline had risen to 20 billion dollars, and, in spite of a new extension of the project deadline to 2022 granted by the NEB, decided to step out of the venture at the end of 2017.

The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline was bound to remain a 'pipeline dream' (Nuttall, 2010a).

1.4. Research question(s)

The thesis is built around one overarching question:

What kind of spatial and temporal dynamics has oil and gas development triggered in Northern Canada over the last fifty years?

This question reflects a double analytical interest:

First, to unravel the diverse, contested and relational ***spaces*** of energy development, in order to ask: What particular spatial imaginaries are produced in the process of hydrocarbon exploration and extraction and how do they materialize? How do the several actors of energy

development (e.g. governments, extractive industries, indigenous peoples) engage in space and place-making? In what way and for what purposes are questions of space mobilized in pipeline negotiations?

Secondly, to explore the particular ***temporalities*** associated with extractive endeavors. In other words, do oil and gas megaprojects affect perceptions and experiences of the past, present and future, and how so? How do aboriginal people participating at pipeline hearings evoke time - for example, through memory and vision? Is time itself an object of negotiation and, if so, what futures are eventually made available for those involved in energy/extractive projects?

From the questions abovementioned, it is implied that the way I will engage with (issues of) space and time is as if these were in a constant and dialectic relationship with each other. Although the idea of the 'intrinsic connectedness' of space and time is definitely not new (Bakhtin, 1981), much of my understanding of these two concepts, as well as the inspiration for this thesis, comes from the work of human geographer Doreen Massey (1994, 2005). While I am going to probe into Massey's so-called "relational geography" in the next chapter, it is worth to anticipate here that the concept which has most deeply informed my whole analytical framework is what Massey terms *space-time*. According to Massey, in fact, while different, space and time are not some static and fixed categories, and rather, are mutually constituted out of continuously changing social relationships. In this sense, Massey encourages 'to think the social in terms of the real multiplicities of space-time'(1994, p. 268), i.e. rather than looking at our objects of inquiry as already placed in space and time, to look at the multiple relationships through which space and time are diversely produced, experienced and mobilized. In this sense, my attention will be devoted to exploring the different spaces and temporalities produced in association with oil and gas development in Northern Canada, and while doing so, to unraveling the complex web of power relations underpinning aboriginal and non-aboriginal space-time productions.

1.5. Doing research at the intersection of multiple fields

Studies of resource extraction in the Arctic

My study of oil and gas development in the Canadian North and of the spatio-temporal dynamics which are both set into motion by this process and contribute to shaping the course of the latter can be framed within a broader field of interest towards resource extraction in Arctic and

Northern regions, currently developing at great speed in many scholarly and non-scholarly environments. The majority of the studies addressing issues of extractivism are situated within disciplines such as anthropology (Dale, Bay-Larsen and Skorstad, 2018; Nuttall, 2010a, 2015; Sejersen, 2015; Wilson and Stammler, 2016), cultural studies (Bjørst, 2016) and political science (Hansen et al., 2016; Lempinen, 2017; Mikkelsen and Langhelle, 2008; Shadian, 2014; Wilson, Hansen and Rowe, 2017). What is common to many of them is an attention towards examining the role and the responsibilities of extractive industries, as well as assessing their impacts on local communities and environments. Through a variety of theoretical and analytical lenses, these studies massively contribute to unraveling the complexity of resource extraction in the Arctic, and to shedding light on the different challenges (e.g. community participation, climate change, sustainability, sovereignty, self-determination, etc.) emerging within this rapidly transforming region.

Throughout this thesis, I will address many of the social and political issues connected to resource extraction, but the way I intend to do so is through a combination of theories, methods and material which, although inspired by existing studies, also differs from them in multiple ways. In this sense, besides adopting a still relatively new spatial perspective on the study of energy, I will also attempt to trace the inner workings and impacts of oil and gas development in the Canadian North mostly by focusing on aboriginal political agency. Furthermore, rather than on more popular ethnographic methods, my analysis will be uniquely based on documents, which, just as people, can indeed be as eloquent as unpredictable.

Energy Humanities

While obviously engaging with "extraction" and with the politics (Szeman, 2017), the practices and the discourses associated with the latter, the backbone and focus of this work is "energy". Although technically constituting only the final outcome of extractive activities, energy has also been regarded as something more than that, and namely as 'a social relation, rather than a mere input in the economic system' (Diamanti, 2016, p. iv). According to this perspective, pioneered by the scholars belonging to the emerging field of 'energy humanities' (Barney, 2017; Bellamy, 2016; Bellamy, O' Driscoll and Simpson, 2016; Bellamy and Diamanti, 2018; LeMenager, 2013; Szeman and Boyer, 2017; Szeman, Wenzel and Yaeger, 2017; Wilson, 2014; Wilson, Carlson

and Szeman, 2017), energy's fundamental social significance derives indeed from its 'specific, hitherto underexplored and consequently, not well-understood role in shaping [people's] values, habits and beliefs' (Szeman, 2015, p. 6).

While my work is not aimed at an extensive investigation of the role of energy on the constitution of contemporary society, it nevertheless shares the same assumptions underlying many of the studies currently ascribable to the field of energy humanities. It is thus worth to notice that much of the material and of the theoretical input presented in the thesis stems from an intense period of research (Winter-Spring 2017) spent in close contact with the scholars connected to the Petrocultures Research Cluster[16] at the University of Alberta (Edmonton, CA). In this regard, a substantial part of this thesis (Chapters 3-4) will be dedicated to tracing *when, how* and *why* oil and gas exploration has become not only an activity deeply rooted into Canadian economic history, but a fundamental element of identification and main driver of space-making across Canada, and the North especially. In order to do so, the chapters combine theoretical insights from studies on nationalism and technology (Adria, 2010; Anderson, 2006; Charland, 1986) together with an empirical exploration of space-bounded national imaginaries, carried out through the analysis of a selection of thematic/resource maps of Canada's Northwest.

Energy geographies

While acknowledging the diverse contributions which inform this thesis and which the latter hopes to make to the fields abovementioned, the novelty of this work resides in its specific choice to investigate Canadian oil and gas development from a *spatial perspective*.

Over the last years, a rising number of scholars have started to address energy-related issues and transformations as fundamental spatial questions, and have thus investigated the role of specific energy resources and infrastructures in the production of different spaces - from urban landscapes (Elling, 2016) to whole regions (Kaisti and Käkönen, 2012; Lempinen, 2017)[17]. Common to those advocating or simply supporting a "spatial turn" in energy research is the idea that, while energy systems undoubtedly produce socio-spatial effects, they can also be seen as

[16] These include Imre Szeman, Sheena Wilson, Mark Simpson, Jordan Kinder and Adam Carlson (see bibliography for references to their works).

[17] In many of these studies, terms such as 'energyscapes' (Lempinen, 2017; 2018; Cardoso and Turhan, 2018), 'carbonscapes' (Haarstad and Wanvik, 2016) or 'petroleumscapes' (Elling, 2017; Hein, 2018; Hein and Sedighi, 2016) have thus appeared.

spatially constituted, i.e. embedded in particular political, institutional and economic settings and scales which affect their formation. Thanks to the efforts of scholars such as Karl Zimmerer (2011), Gavin Bridge (2018) and Kirby Calvert (2016), the field of 'energy geographies'[18] has thus emerged in order to unravel the complex relationship between energy and space, and, most importantly, to do so by welcoming insights from a broad variety of disciplines.

As made evident from my research question(s), space and time - or, more precisely, *space-time* - are not only my privileged analytical categories, but also the pivotal elements encompassing much of this work's underlying theory (and epistemology)[19], which is therefore deeply rooted in human geography. In spite of referring to and taking inspiration from different scholars within this broad discipline, my own spatial thinking owes much to human geographer Doreen Massey. As I am going to discuss in the next chapter, I consider in fact her "relational" understanding of space a great theoretical and analytical lens to grasp the complexity of the multiple spatialities embedded in and resulting from processes of energy development.

1.6. The spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development

According to French philosopher Michel Foucault, 'space is fundamental in any exercise of power' (1984, p. 252). Similarly, a core assumption shared by several so-called 'post-structuralist' studies of space (Amin, 2004; Cresswell, 1992; Harvey, 1989; Massey, 2005; Urry, 2002) is the idea that space-making is a politically charged activity, which generates different (and potentially conflicting) implications for those involved in it.

Drawing upon these considerations, I refer to the *spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development* to describe the ways in which space and time are understood, configured and managed in the context of hydrocarbon exploration and extraction, in order to legitimate, actively encourage or preclude certain political, social and economic transformations. In the case of Canada, this spatio-temporal politics has been articulated through a great number of documents and initiatives, which have contributed to making a specific future - of shared

[18] A broader discussion of this emerging field of and my own contribution to it will be contained at the beginning of the next chapter.
[19] As well as, at least partially, guiding the choice of my material, such as in the case of maps (Chapter 4).

resources, jobs, rights or all of them at once - *spatially* concrete, and thus also *temporally* ready to achieve.

In this context, I argue that the MVP community hearings constitute a uniquely informative space to unravel the spatio-temporal politics of Canadian oil and gas development for a variety of reasons. First of all, the hearings themselves can be seen as an integral component of the (not always successful) efforts of government and industry towards embedding aboriginal consultation into standardized and legible institutional frameworks. Secondly, within the hearings, the elusive spatial and temporal strategies put into practice by government and industry as well as the impacts of the latter on Northern residents are directly addressed and exposed by aboriginal participants. Finally, as I am going to point out in the conclusions of this work, aboriginal engagements with questions of space and time at the hearings, because directly linked to or even potentially constituting themselves political claims, suggest that what aboriginal people articulate at the MVP hearings is also a specific form of spatio-temporal politics.

The MVP community hearings as a uniquely informative case

Canadian aboriginal people have, especially in the North, been not only deeply affected by the social, economic and environmental consequences of the hunt for resources, but have also increasingly used resource extraction as a powerful leverage to advance a wide range of claims. For this reason, while my first analytical choice is to look at Canadian oil and gas development through the category of space-time, my second one is to investigate the complexity of this development through the experiences, the understandings and the voices of Northern aboriginal people[20]. In this sense, through my analysis of Dene testimonies presented during the negotiation of the MVP, I intend to pursue three objectives, namely:

(1) To explore the different spatialities[21] emerging within community hearings;

[20] As previously noted, my attention has been focused on the testimonies of the Dene people (especially Sahtu) living in the Mackenzie Valley.

[21] I intend the word 'spatiality' as a synonym of 'space-time' (Massey, 1999) or, as Edward Soja (1989, p.12) defines it, as a 'triple dialectic of space, time and social being'. As I will argue, during the hearings, different spatialities materialize and take shape through indigenous storytelling.

(2) To explore the different temporalities[22] evoked within the same context, and
(3) To look at the specific 'space-time'of the hearings and at how this relates to wider political and institutional transformations taking place in the Canadian North between the 1970s and the 2000s.

In order to do so, I draw much of my inspiration from existing studies of indigenous politics in Northern Canada (Coulthard, 2014; Dokis, 2015; Nadasdy, 2017; Nuttall, 2010a), and from studies examining the temporal-affective dimensions of resource extraction (Ferry and Limbert, 2008; Weszkalnys, 2014, 2016).

1.7. Thesis outline

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Specifically, Chapters 1-2 introduce the work's empirical material, theories and methodologies, Chapters 3 and 5 contain a summary of Canadian petroleum history, respectively through the lens of non-aboriginal and aboriginal involvement in resource development, Chapter 4 is a theoretical-analytical chapter, and finally, Chapters 6-7 constitute the two main analytical chapters.

Starting from a reflection on 'absence', in Chapter 1 I have introduced the reader to some of the main themes, research questions and concepts which this thesis will investigate and elaborate on. In the chapter, some general information regarding the context - i.e. the places and the people I write about and their deeply interwoven stories - has also been provided, together with an entry point to the diverse fields of scholarship (e.g. studies on resource extraction in the Arctic, energy humanities, energy geographies, etc.) I aim to contribute to with this work.

Chapter 2 expands on some of the theoretical and methodological insights offered in the first chapter. In this sense, the choice of adopting a spatial perspective on the study of Canadian oil and gas development is theoretically grounded in the emerging field of 'energy geographies'. After illustrating the characteristics of the so-called "spatial turn" in social science energy research and offering a general overview of key space and place theorists, the chapter frames the

[22] In other words, the different ways of experiencing, perceiving and scaling time (ex. "past", "present" and "future" or "short-term" vs. "long-term").

theoretical and epistemological backbone of this work in human geographer Doreen Massey's *relational* understanding of space. By drawing upon Massey's commitment towards considering questions of space and time as strictly interrelated, I choose the concept of spatiality or, using Massey's words, *space-time* as the analytical lens through which to approach different kinds of empirical material. With regard to the latter, in the final part of the chapter, issues of access and selection are addressed, including the choice of using documents, such as maps and community hearing transcripts, as both instruments and objects of analysis. Finally, research methods - i.e. discursive genealogy and Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis - and my own deviations from their traditional use are introduced and explained.

Chapter 3 is a "background" chapter which is aimed at providing a condensed but sufficiently detailed overview of Canadian oil and gas history. In the attempt to emphasize the importance of *storytelling* in the formation, circulation and maintenance of Canada's petro-history, I conduct a discursive genealogy (Dean, 1992; Foucault, 1978a; Koopman, 2013) of what I term "petro-narratives", namely the different stories which have been used to make meaning of and eventually promote hydrocarbon exploration and extraction throughout Canada. By looking at a wide range of sources - including, political speeches, scientific reports, pieces of legislation, newspaper articles and diaries of early explorers - I identify *five petro-narratives* which have contributed to constructing, performing and promoting hydrocarbon development respectively as a story of discovery and wonder, a story of scientific achievement, a story of heroism and braveness and, especially in the aftermath of WWII, as a "national" story.

Chapter 4 proceeds from the conclusions of the previous chapter to argue that oil and gas development can be seen not only as a fundamental part of Canadian economic history, but as expression of a powerful nationalist strategy, aimed at creating and maintaining a national collectivity characterized by an absolute reliance on fossil fuels - namely, what I term "petro-nation". The chapter can be thus divided into two parts. In the *first* part, I explore the process of Canadian petro-nation-building by drawing upon different theories of nationalism and particularly, upon Maurice Charland's concept of technological nationalism (1986). My critical engagement with Charland's technological nationalism functions as the point of departure to discuss the complex entanglement among nation, technology and space. Starting from these

(mainly theoretical) considerations, in the *second* part of the chapter, I focus on the fundamental role of the Canadian North in the construction of the 'petro-nation'. While the North has indeed been imagined and represented in different ways throughout history, I suggest that the 'frontier' - or, more precisely, the 'energy frontier' - is the spatial imaginary to have produced the most long-lasting effects on Northern developments, relations and identities. Far from being uniquely a technological space crossed by (prospective or existing) pipelines, the Northwest energy frontier is also a spatial imaginary made extremely concrete and present thanks to one specific technology, namely maps. Therefore, in the final part of the chapter, I explore the tight connection between cartography and resource development in the Canadian North, by analyzing a selection of maps and mapping initiatives.

Chapter 5 is what can be considered an "in-between chapter", which is meant to introduce the two following analytical chapters. In this sense, if Canadian hydrocarbon development has been mostly addressed so far from the perspective of Canadian government and extractive industry, this chapter makes the connection between Northern aboriginal people and resource development much more explicit. Starting from a discussion on the analytical value of a 'relational' understanding of frontiers rather than a mere 'territorial' one, the chapter moves on to a brief yet significant historical enquiry on the role of Northern aboriginal people in Canadian oil and gas development. By emphasizing the importance of this role, especially in terms of political mobilization, the chapter concludes by suggesting that the Northwest of the country is a 'frontier of complexity', i.e. a messy, liminal and multi-layered spatiality, differently articulated, enacted and experienced by the differently positioned actors of energy development.

Chapter 6 and 7 turn the focus on the main case study of this thesis, namely the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline across the NWT. The chapters constitute also the analytical backbone of this thesis, and are therefore dedicated to unraveling the multiple spatialities which are constructed, evoked and mobilized during two rounds of community hearings: the Berger Inquiry (1974-1977) and the JRP hearings (2006-2007). In both chapters, I examine selected Dene testimonies at the hearings by means of the textual framework provided by Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. More specifically, in Chapter 6, I look at how aboriginal participants at the Berger Inquiry evoke three different yet interrelated spatialities, namely 1) the

land; 2) the nation and 3) the indigenous space; whereas, in Chapter 7, I explore how the dense spatiality of the 'land' is conceptualized at the JRP hearings either in striking opposition to or in accord with 'money', and how, even more than before, different temporalities are conjured up by the participants at the hearings.

Finally, the thesis ends with a concluding section that summarizes, extends and reflects on the key findings.

Chapter 2. Theoretical and methodological reflections.

2.1. Framing the field: energy geographies

Energy is produced and distributed through a large network of infrastructures. It moves at a fast pace, crossing (or sometimes even neglecting) borders, connecting places and communities, and by doing so, inevitably affecting socio-spatial relations. The relationship between energy and space is in this sense mutually constitutive. On the one hand, energy systems - under which geographer Gavin Bridge (2018, p. 13) includes 'resources, technologies, organizational forms and operating criteria' - have spatial outcomes, meaning that they create and affect space in particular ways. These systems produce new energy landscapes, shape global networks of energy stakeholders, and activate or preclude mobility. On the other hand, energy systems are spatially constituted, meaning that they are embedded in particular settings and scales (Bridge et al., 2013, p. 333), and therefore, need to be understood by addressing the influence of political, economic and cultural processes into their formation. Both energy and even more, systems of energy provision - such as pipelines - appear then to have a geographical significance which I am here interested in investigating. Starting from the premise that 'it is no longer tenable for social science research to understand energy systems without some consideration of space' (Bridge, 2018, p. 11), I am going to frame my research within the emerging field of *energy geographies* (Bouzarovski S., Petrova, S. and Sarlamanov, R., 2012; Calvert, 2016; Zimmerer, 2011).

There is a long tradition of geographers who have shown interest in the study of energy, and who have engaged with energy issues through very different and multifaceted theoretical and methodological lenses. To briefly trace an evolution of such engagements is therefore instrumental to outline my own positioning in the field.

By looking at early examples of geographic interest in energy-related topics, it emerges that, in the beginning at least, the attention of geographers was mostly devoted to the economic and technical aspects of energy resources. For this reason, the first accounts published in geographic journals during the 1960s and 1970s consisted in utterly descriptive articles thoroughly illustrating the opportunities and risks deriving from the installation of nuclear plants, and in books outlining the economic geography of current oil and gas industry (Luten, 1971; van Zyl, 1968; Odell, 1963; Manners, 1971). In 1961, Canadian Geographer John D. Chapman

published the essay *Geography and Energy,* paving the way to the development of a whole new discipline, so-called 'energy geography'. Since then, the interest of geographers in the study of energy has far from decreased and the spectrum of this discipline has been constantly widening. In this sense, it might be worth to look at the definition of energy geography given by two core representatives of this field, Barry D. Solomon and Martin J. Pasqualetti (2004, p. 841) who describe energy geography as 'the study of energy development, transportation, markets, landscapes, or use patterns and their determinants from a spatial, regional, or resource management perspective'. Although this definition is on the one hand quite effective in delineating the field of inquiry, on the other hand, it presents also some limitations, mainly linked to its still predominantly economic perspective. Therefore, over the last ten years, an increasing number of geographers have attempted to address energy systems in a broader perspective, eventually contributing to the diverse nature of the spatial studies related to energy. As a result of these efforts, in 2011, American geographer Karl Zimmerer introduced a Special Issue of the Annals of the Association of American Geographers, called *New Geographies of Energy*. Here, the use of the plural form, far from being the result of a stylistic choice, reveals on the contrary a specific intent. According to Zimmerer and other geographers following his same line of thought, geography needs to be flexible and embrace variety, in order to address the challenges arising by changing energy landscapes, which 'as distinguished here, intermingle in dynamic, place-based processes' (2011, p. 705). This dynamism can indeed be regarded as one of the core elements to describe the state of the field. The field of energy geographies is meant to be dynamic, and to incorporate, within its domain, theories, concepts and methodologies borrowed from different disciplines. The shift in the terminology from 'energy geography' to 'energy geographies' is then symptomatic of a precise intention, made more or less explicit by the scholars of the field: to adopt and welcome pluralism in the research.

As I see it, the recognition of the fundamental need for pluralism within spatial studies of energy inevitably paves the way to a higher degree of research inclusiveness, and to an expansion of the field of energy geographies to the point of including not only the works of geographers, but also of several other 'spatially-sensitive' (Bridge, 2018, p. 12) energy researchers. In this regard, although not being a geographer myself, I nevertheless do value the original and fruitful insights that geography gives to the study of energy. For this reason,

throughout this thesis, I am often going to employ different spatial concepts, such as space, territory or scale, to inform my own study of Canadian oil and gas development.

Yet, the reasons why I am convinced that 'energy geographies' is the most suitable descriptor for the kind of research that I am going to conduct go beyond considerations on the theoretical flexibility of the works linked to this field of enquiry. Kirby Calvert (2016), a human geographer and major advocate of this new spatial turn in the study of energy, provides a very good explanation of why energy *geographies* (rather than 'geography') is indeed the most precise and comprehensive term. He does so by arguing that energy is, in its very essence, plural. As he states (pp.108-109),

> energy is simultaneously a physical entity (…); a social relation to the extent that physical entities are socially constructed as energy resources through political-economic and cultural processes but also a primary agent in the spatialization of social activities (…); the primary mediator of our relationship with the environment (…); non uniform over space (…).

This description identifies rather accurately the multiple qualities of energy, which can be regarded as simultaneously a material and immaterial entity, deeply entangled within social processes. Such characteristics, I suggest, are to a certain degree shared also by energy resources and energy infrastructures. Energy resources (e.g. oil and gas) and energy infrastructures (e.g. pipelines) are inherently multiple, heterogeneous, constantly becoming and thus, potentially unpredictable and often hard to govern. Regarding the "unfinished" character of resources, geographer Gavin Bridge (2009, p. 1220) writes that 'resources are a relational understanding of the non-human world', meaning that something is categorized as a resource only in relation with other factors - such as other materials, knowledge, the opportunity of creating value by exchange. By expanding on the words of Bridge, I intend to adopt a more specific way of understanding the term "relational" in connection with energy systems, which emphasizes the *socio-spatial relations* simultaneously constituted by and constituting energy resources and infrastructures. In this sense, for instance, the historical and discursive transformation of oil into a national symbol (Wilson, Carlson and Szeman, 2017), a local pride (Elling, 2014) or a global commodity (Mitchell, 2011) on the one hand, and the material construction of a pipeline through indigenous lands on the other one, are to be similarly approached as processes highly dependent

upon (and similarly triggering) multiple connections among people, places and technologies. A relational view of energy and energy technologies then, I argue, helps grasp the interconnections which link specific extractive sites, histories and futures together with a multiplicity of others, in spite of their apparent distance. Therefore, in addition to the reasons abovementioned, I find once again the term *energy geographies* extremely fitting and accurate in including those socio-spatial connections (and possibly, divisions) which are inevitably produced by natural resources and further increased through the building of extractive infrastructures. As I intend to show in this work, contested infrastructures such as pipelines contribute to creating new energy geographies, i.e. physical and imaginary spaces where people find themselves increasingly connected (or divided), and where identities, narratives and power relations need to be suddenly (re)negotiated. Pipelines then, although still discussed and appreciated mostly for their economic and technological aspects, prove to have a spatial - and temporal - significance, which I believe geography as a discipline can help explore and better appreciate.

Out of the different insights from human geography which I draw upon throughout the next chapters, the main epistemological background of this thesis is rooted in the so-called *relational understanding of space*, pioneered by human geographer Doreen Massey (1944-2016). I consider in fact Massey's understanding of space as an open and porous entity particularly apt to explain space-making in the context of Canadian hydrocarbon exploration and extraction, and to investigate the ambiguous and often contested Northern geographies resulting from this process. In the following paragraphs, I am going to elaborate on the main considerations guiding this choice.

2.2. Epistemological considerations

Theories of place and space

Before probing deeper into Doreen Massey's theory of the relational nature of space, I will spend few words on clarifying a long-standing debate in geography, namely the question of *place* and *space* (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2010; Low, 2016). By referring to the works of different scholars, I intend to briefly discuss here the characteristics of both space and place, and to argue for not using them dichotomously, but dialectically.

First of all, as emphasized by Giddens (1990, p. 18), distinctions between place and space have emerged with modernity, which has contributed to tearing 'space away from place by fostering relations between "absent" others'. In the early 1970s, Marxist theorist Henri Lefebvre (1991) theorized a notion of *space as socially produced*, by distinguishing between an 'abstract space', created by capitalism and economic processes, and a 'concrete space', which needs to be reclaimed against the attempts of capitalistic colonization. Space is thus not only a social product, but also a fundamental tool of power and control used to exercise dominance. Lefebvre's theorizations have certainly influenced many other geographers, including Edward Soja and David Harvey. Soja was inspired by Lefebvre's three-way dialectic of perceived, conceived and lived space in his own theorization of the 'socio-spatial dialectic' (1980). Similarly, he also made a distinction among three different spatial dimensions (1996): the 'firstspace' (the real world), the 'secondspace' ('imagined representations of spatiality', ibid. p.6) and the thirdspace (the privileged space encompassing all the previous dimensions).

David Harvey (1996, pp. 293-294) argues that if space is a continuous product of capitalism, place can be both '(a) a mere position or location within a map of space-time constituted within some social process or (b) an entity or "permanence" occurring within and transformative of the construction of space-time'. Understood by Harvey as a 'unique conjunction of built environments, cultures, peoples, etc. that distinguish one locality from another' (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2010, p. 238), place is configured within the capitalistic framework as 'permanence', a singularity in opposition to the flow of capital. Harvey claims thus for a re-appropriation of (local) place against the flow of global capitalism, based on the recognition that wider movements to contrast global capitalism start from local interventions. He names this element 'militant particularism' (2009, p. 179), which 'seizes upon the qualities of a place, reanimates the bond between the environmental and the social and seeks to bend the social processes constructing space-time to a radically different purpose'. In Harvey's reading, place becomes then a valuable political tool to contrast the spatial power of capitalism.

Moving back to Lefebvre's theory of space, it is worth to notice that, although offering the first articulation of a socially-produced notion of space, this theory also introduces a sharp distinction between space and place, where the latter is conceived simply as a particular form of the first (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2010). This understanding of place started soon to be challenged by those

humanistic geographers whose works were influenced by phenomenology and existentialism. Therefore, in the second half of the 20th century, two ways of conceptualizing place and space were established, the Lefebvrian one, strictly *geometrical*, which regarded place as a mere part of space, and the other one, *phenomenological*, attributing to place some distinctive characteristics of its own (Ley, 1981; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). One of the major representatives of this second perspective was Yi-Fu Tuan who, from a phenomenological perspective, identified a fundamental bond between human experience and place named 'topophilia', which plays a key role in shaping places as 'fields of care' (1974).

It is worth to notice that the opposition between place and space, although formulated in different terms, has been mainly reinforced through dichotomies: place associated with the past, while space with future, place described as mere location on a surface (space) or finally, place as concrete and space as abstract. Such a dichotomous reading has inspired a series of accounts from different geographers (Augé, 2008; Friedmann, 2010; Relph, 1976) claiming an increasing domination of space over place, and a progressive destruction of (local) place by (global) space. Against oppositional readings of place and space, persistently asserting the authenticity and rootedness of place against the abstractness of space, a group of post-structuralist/critical thinkers started to argue for a so-called 'relational' understanding of space and place. According to this perspective, adopted primarily by human geographer Doreen Massey (1994), and further developed also by others such as Ash Amin (2004), John Urry (2002) and Tim Cresswell (1992), places are to be seen as articulations of social relations, which take place at a much broader scale than the individual one. Moreover, perceptions and experiences of place may sensitively vary according to the social group which is involved in this process. There is thus an inner element of multiplicity both in space and place which needs to be acknowledged.

Finally, somewhat similar to Doreen Massey's relational understanding of space is the so-called performative perspective, advanced by geographer Nigel Thrift (2003). This perspective shares with Massey the focus on places as 'open spaces', i.e. never finished, but made out of constantly shifting social and material relations. At the same time, Thrift's spatial theorizations have much in common with early phenomenological accounts and with studies on affect, as he conceptualizes place as a spatiality deeply involved with 'embodiment' (2008), meaning that being in place always involves a wide range of cognitive and physical performances.

After this general and in no way comprehensive overview of key theories on space and place, I will attempt to situate my own spatial thinking somewhere close to Doreen Massey's relational geography. In order to do so, I will introduce the main characteristics of the so-called "relational turn" in geography, and briefly address some of the criticism which has been moved towards it.

The relational turn in human geography

The major inspiration for human geographers interested in relationality is Leibniz's theory of space, which stands in direct contrast to Newton's theory of the absolute space. In opposition to Newton, according to Leibniz (Alexander, 1956), space is relational in the sense that it cannot exist independently of its events and objects, and is, instead, directly constituted by the *relations* between them. Geographer David Harvey shares with Leibniz the idea that space is not a mere container, but rather, is generated by interactions and interrelations. Place formation is then in Harvey's view, a process of creating 'permanences', i.e. of occupying 'a piece of space in an exclusive way (for a specific period of time) and thus defin[ing] a place - their place - (for this period of time)' (Harvey and Braun, 1996, p. 293). Although critical towards the flows of capitalism, Harvey sees eventually place-making - in spite of its militant potential - as a rooted and dangerous reaction to a hypermobile world.

Differently from Harvey, Doreen Massey, the main representative of the relational turn, is more optimistic regarding the fluid and dynamic essence of space. According to Massey, places are 'meeting places'(1994, p. 154), where relations - both in the form of conflict and consensus - interweave. This means that the 'local' and the 'global' are always products of wider contacts, of forces and connections stretching far beyond any given scale. A particular attention towards the aspect of *connectivity* is indeed shared by the different geographers that can be linked to the relational turn. In the words of Nigel Thrift (2004, p. 59), 'space is no longer seen as a nested hierarchy moving from 'global' to 'local'. This absurd scale-dependent notion is replaced by the notion that what counts is connectivity'. In a similar fashion, Ash Amin (2004) proposes to counteract current regional politics, which only takes into account developments occurring within very limited and bounded spaces, with what he calls a 'politics of connectivity', one which 'cannot escape the connections, meanings and influences that are never quite of that place' (p.40). Because of the wide array of relations and histories informing them, spaces and

places are seen by many relational geographers as in a state of constant *becoming*. In this regard, post-structuralist geographer Marcus Doel (2007, p. 809) states that 'space is continuously being made, unmade, and remade by the incessant shuffling of heterogeneous relations, its potential can never be contained and its exuberance can never be quelled.'

Relational geographers have, however, also been the object of more or less severe criticism. For example, Noel Castree (2004) has argued that the perspectives advocated by geographers such as Michael Watts, Doreen Massey and David Harvey provide a not so nuanced understanding of place. Specifically, at the core of Castree's critique is the idea that so-called 'exclusionary place projects' (p.152), which Massey and the other relational geographers often warn against, might indeed not be so regressive and exclusionary at all, as in the case of indigenous localism. Castree suggests that to support cosmopolitan and open understandings of place only could eventually preclude the possibility of equally legitimate '"closed" place projects' (p. 163). However, as pointed out also by geographer Matthew Sparke (2007), Castree's position, although very well-founded, might eventually not differ so much from Massey's, insofar as it also acknowledges the inevitable existence and constant negotiation of 'translocal ties' also at a local/place level.

While relational geographers do agree on not attributing place any essentialist feature, and advocate an understanding of space as being co-constituted by multiple mobilities and interactions, they have also often been criticized for not paying enough attention to those 'forces/factors that restrict, constrain, contain, and connect the mobility of relational things' (Jones, 2009, p. 496). Nevertheless, I suggest that much of this criticism is potentially ungrounded, since issues of immobility and fixity are indeed addressed by geographers sharing an interest in relationality. John Urry, for example, conceptualizes what he calls the 'mobility/moorings dialectic' (2003) to argue that, in our increasingly complex and mobile world, there has to be some form of immobility '[to] enable, produce and presuppose extensive new mobilities' (p.138). Urry's considerations can be linked to those of other relational geographers - including Massey herself who, through her concept of 'power-geometry', points out how space can *still* be static and rooted, and how space-making can easily turn into a deeply exclusionary activity, encouraging processes of "Othering". To embrace a relational understanding of space entails then to acknowledge that the relations constituting and constituted by space are inevitably of very different nature, and generating very different political

implications. Therefore, while, on the one hand, these relations might facilitate equal movement and access, they might, on the other one, also reproduce isolation and unbalanced developments.

2.3. Doreen Massey's relational geography

I have to admit that I came across the work of Doreen Massey in a rather late stage of my academic career. I do not have any background in human geography, and Massey's name came out all of a sudden, during a very stimulating conversation I had with a colleague, in that intense and yet tremendously demanding period that precedes the hand-in of a PhD proposal. One can say then that Doreen Massey was my first approach to human geography, and that she is probably still the one that has exercised the strongest influence on my own spatial thinking. However, what I am going to discuss here is not intended to cover the incredible variety and sophistication of Massey's work, and has therefore to be seen as an attempt (and possibly not always a successful one) to engage with her conceptualizations, rather than to offer a zealous application of the latter. The way I am going to proceed is by drawing upon her three *propositions on space*, where Massey (2005, p. 9) defines space as (a) 'the product of interrelations', (b) 'the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity', and (c) 'a process'. Although not strictly following this order, I will nevertheless seek to navigate through her relational thinking, and, subsequently, to illustrate how her theorization can provide a useful framework for my own study of oil and gas development in the NWT, and for my analysis of the MVP negotiations (1974-2017).

a) A relational understanding of space and place

One of the main arguments of Doreen Massey's relational geography revolves around the necessity of not opposing place and space, and rather, of treating them as strictly interrelated and influencing each other. For this reason, many of Massey's considerations on place can be easily applied to space as well and vice versa.

In 1994, Doreen Massey published the book *Space, Place and Gender* which included an essay destined to become her powerful manifesto, 'A Global Sense of Place'. In here, Massey identifies a current tendency - visible both in geography and in other disciplines - to describe modernity as characterized by a constant speed-up of daily life, and by a reconfiguration of borders and barriers, where both are getting increasingly blurred. This whole process of

transformation is further intensified by the emergence of a global dimension exercising a rising hegemony over the local. In these times of hectic change, Massey notices that idealized notions of place are developed, attempting to interpret places as sites of rootedness and authenticity, whose presumed identity, irreparably challenged by global mobility and growing interconnections, needs therefore to be preserved. In reaction to such static and possibly exclusionary interpretations of place, Massey poses in the book a challenging question: 'Can we rethink our sense of place?'. To understand what Massey means here with 'sense of place', it is necessary to take a step back, and, without digging too deep into the definitional issue the term 'place' has been at the center of, to attempt to clarify the main features of this concept.

In 1987, political geographer John Agnew outlined three fundamental dimensions to take in consideration when talking about 'place', i.e. place as location, place as a locale and most importantly, place as a sense of place. If the first dimension refers to the actual position of a place 'or a site in space where an activity or object is located' (2011, p. 23), a locale is, for Agnew, the setting where certain social relations are articulated, 'the where of social life and environmental transformation' (ibid.).What role then does sense of place play in this definition? Sense of place is made up of those feelings of belonging, of identification, of emotional and subjective connection that people develop and share with a place. Memories, knowledge, experiences that people have more or less consciously collected, they all contribute to producing a place, imbuing it with several and possibly different layers of meaning and creating a specific (and assumedly unique) bond between individuals (or groups) and places. This definition of sense of place is the starting point from where Doreen Massey further develops and makes explicit some of the implications emerging from Agnew's work.

On the one hand, it is in fact absolutely reasonable to say that people continuously intertwine particular connections and grow feelings of attachment with the places they live in or which, even temporarily, constitute an important part of their lives. On the other hand, however, these feelings contribute to turning places into bounded and given entities, instead of seeing them as continuously created and re-created through multiple and possibly contrasting senses of place. Sense of place then too often risks to be translated into dangerous exclusionary practices. The mistake here, according to Massey, is to interpret places as sites of singular histories and identities, instead of acknowledging their inner multiplicity and hybridity. For Massey, to rethink our sense of place means then to embrace what she calls *a progressive (or global) sense of place*,

which, far from being unique and unchanging, is instead constantly subject to the flows, the movements and the interconnections which are produced at different levels, from the local to the global.

Massey's theorization of a 'progressive' sense of place is a constitutive part of her so-called *relational* understanding of space and place. As previously observed, differently from other human geographers - such as those inspired by phenomenology (Augé, 2008; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974) - Massey considers space and place not in opposition, but strictly interrelated with each other. Space is not an abstract entity or a mere "surface" on which assumedly more meaningful place is located. It is, instead, as concrete as place, which, on the other hand, encapsulates a particular moment, an intersection out of the constellation of social relations constructing space. For this reason, Massey insists on the necessity of addressing local place and global space not by crystalizing them into very unproductive dichotomies, but by focusing on their essential state of co-production and co-existence. In this regard, she writes (2004, p. 5):

> If space is a product of practices, trajectories, interrelations, if we make space through interactions at all levels, from the (so-called) local to the (so-called) global, then those spatial identities such as places, regions, nations, and the local and the global, must be forged in this relational way too, as internally complex, essentially unboundable in any absolute sense and inevitably historically changing.

To look at spatiality through this relational lens entails then that space-making (as place-making) needs to be addressed as an essentially relational activity, a 'networked process' (Pierce, Martin and Murphy, 2010) carried out through multiple interactions, which will inevitably contribute to forging more or less asymmetrical power relations.

b) Space as process

By imagining space as a process, Doreen Massey points out another contested object of discussion among human geographers: the relationship between space and time. Relational geographers have sometimes been criticized for not having a proper regard for questions of time in their approaches, and for advocating what Jones (2009, p. 497) calls an 'open-ended and timeless politics of connection and encounter'.

While I will further elaborate on Doreen Massey's concept of 'space-time' in the next section, it is important to stress now that, according to Massey, the relationship between space and time has been framed by geographers in the wrong way, through a constant "freezing" of space into time. In this sense, she borrows from fellow geographer David Harvey the concept of 'time-space compression', i.e. the constant time acceleration (triggered by economic processes) which progressively dismantles any spatial distance. Harvey (1989, p. 240) describes time-space compression as '[those] processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves'. Although Massey does not agree with Harvey when it comes to the origins of time-space compression[23], she nevertheless does recognize the significance of this process, and the need to rethink the way place is understood in relation to time. If Harvey's definition of time-space compression implies a criticism towards any global process as a product of capitalism, Massey is more cautious, and proposes a less universal and ethnocentric view of time-space compression, in favor of an appreciation of the specificity of each person's mobile experience. As a result, she introduces the concept of *power-geometry* to indicate the different ways in which the time-space compression is perceived and experienced by differently (power) positioned people. In this regard, Massey notices (1994, p. 149):

> Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.

Therefore, while acknowledging the fundamental issues of power in connection with conceiving space as a product of interrelations, she also warns against the manipulation of time-space compression in order to generate insecurity or to advocate the return to a glorious and romanticized past. In order to counteract the attempts to turn place into a single historical trajectory, Massey suggests a much more inclusive and open-ended perspective, which dynamically approaches space, as '[a] provisionally intertwined simultaneit[y] of ongoing,

[23] In this regard, she notices that 'the current speed-up may be strongly determined by economic forces, but it is not the economy alone which determines our experience of space and place' (1994, p. 148).

unfinished, stories' (2006, p. 46). In this reading, space is no longer approached as ontologically given, but as in a state of constant becoming, never finished but always in the process of being 'made', and therefore subject to continuous inputs, re-definitions and transformations. Importantly, according to Massey, this *unfinishedness* of space affects not only how the present of a place is understood, but also how place's past(s) and future(s) are. There are and there will always be different histories, which will all more or less predominantly influence the way a place is remembered, interpreted and configured. As Massey (1995, p. 187) effectively underscores, 'the past, then, helps make the present. But it is a two-way process. For all these presences of the past are multi-vocal'. In the same way, regarding the future, she notices (2005, p. 11), 'in this open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished'. Diversity - of stories, connections and possibilities - emerges then as the pivotal element of Massey's relational understanding of space and place, and, accordingly, also of her view of space as the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity.

c) Space as a simultaneity of stories

In connection with the previous point, Massey (2005, p. 119) urges to rethink space 'as the sphere of a multiplicity of trajectories', each of which contains a specific set of histories, practices and narratives, all leaving a "trace" in the production of space/place. When discussing about space and spatial activities in particular, Massey insists on the need to acknowledge the inevitability of multiplicity, i.e. of multiple identities, stories and interests, which engage with space production through relations of coexistence and clash. Through this relational reading, place is approached not as a closed and bordered spatiality, but, rather, as very open and cross-border one, a "here and now" in which people (or even other places) find themselves suddenly gathered or, to use Massey's terminology, 'thrown together'.

In this regard, I find the notion of *throwntogetherness* particularly effective to describe how space and place are produced through the 'coming together' of different stories, people and places. This process, according to Massey (2005, p. 160), constitutes 'a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman'. Places emerge thus as what Kirsten Simonsen (2007, p. 179) terms 'loci of encounters', i.e. 'meeting points, moments or conjunctures where social practices and trajectories meet up with moving and fixed materialities

and form configurations that are continuously under transformation and negotiation'. However, as Simonsen (2016) also underlines, place as encounters always entails to encounter the "Other", meaning that as soon as we accept a relational reading of space/place, we also need to acknowledge that these encounters might often be violent, antagonistic, uneven, and thus requiring constant and possibly complicated negotiations.

In her essay *Geographies of Responsibility* (2004), Doreen Massey is once again particularly clear regarding the implications of a relational view of space. Here, she stresses in fact that 'if places (localities, regions, nations) are necessarily the location of the intersection of disparate trajectories, then they are necessarily places of 'negotiation' in the widest sense of that term' (p.6). It is in this element of negotiation that we can sense the tension often surrounding spatial productions and perceptions, a tension which - as I am going to discuss later - is traceable also in the contested making of energy geographies.

2.4. Combining relationality and energy geographies

As I anticipated in the introduction to this chapter, I consider relational thinking the most apt to explore the dynamic and unpredictable character of energy geographies, and especially of those emerging from processes of hydrocarbon exploration and extraction. Such geographies, because inherently contested, are continuously negotiated and renegotiated by a broad diversity of actors[24], at local and global scales, and are embedded in complex relations of both conflict and cooperation.

For the purposes of this thesis, namely to investigate what kind of spatial and temporal dynamics has oil and gas development triggered in the Northwest of Canada over the last fifty years, I identify three interconnected energy geographies, which I term *the petro-nation*, the *energy frontier* and *the (pipeline) hearing space*. While the petro-nation and the energy frontier are both spatial imaginaries, respectively of Canada and of the Northwest of the country, I argue that their discursive production and sustenance has generated very concrete effects on patterns of development, political and economic decisions, and cultural identities. On the other hand, the (pipeline) hearing space, far from merely coinciding with the locations where the testimonies have been collected, progressively emerges as a politically and emotionally-charged place of

[24] Sometimes, these are called 'energy stakeholders'.

encounter (Morris and Fondahl, 2002; Simonsen, 2016), which is dynamically co-constituted by the actors interacting within it. What these three interrelated spaces have eventually in common is not only their origin in the complex discursive apparatus of Canadian oil and gas development, but their imagination as ordered and governable spatialities, in contrast with a much more dynamic and heterogeneous reality.

The petro-nation

In Chapter 4, I argue that oil and gas development has not only been a red thread through Canadian history, but, increasingly, also the object of a cunning nationalist strategy. This strategy, through its emphasis on the unifying aspects of extractive technologies and on the shared opportunities provided by the pursuit of resource exploitation, has been used to create and maintain a national collectivity characterized by an absolute reliance on fossil fuels, namely what I call a 'petro-nation'. The petro-nation has indeed a fundamental *spatial* significance since its existence is highly dependent upon the imagination and subsequent territorial configuration of a national space of belonging, (extr)activism and shifting opportunity. In spite of the attempts to fix it - through the technology of maps and pipelines - the petro-national space is, however, a constantly transforming one, where lands and territories are strategically claimed under the banner of sovereignty or self-determination, where people move along "energy corridors", and where new boundaries are continuously delineated.

The energy frontier

Regarding boundaries, petro-nationalism does require them not only to define who belong and who do not, but also to create specific hopes and expectations of what lies on the other side of the line. Such boundaries are therefore more often than not imagined as 'frontiers'.

Starting from these premises, in the second part of Chapter 4, I focus on the emergence of the Northwest frontier, and on its progressive transformation into what I call the 'energy frontier' as a concrete expression of the territorial practices carried out within petro-nation-building. At the same time, while frontiers are indeed territorial entities aimed at supporting the creation of a governable space, to embrace a strictly territorial reading of the dense spatiality of frontiers risks to neglect frontiers' fundamental diversity and ambivalence. Frontiers are in fact rarely uncontested and immutable territorial entities and rather, emerge as messy, porous and dynamic

borders (Massey, 1994; Yacobi, 2015), which resist attempts to imbue them with a singular identity. In this regard, Massey's relational understanding of space can help grab the complexity of frontiers and especially, of *resource frontiers*. In Chapter 4, I adopt thus a relational approach to theorize the Northwest energy frontier as a contested space of extraction, conflict and potentiality populated by different actors whose ambitions and priorities, regardless of how diverse, are strictly intertwined with each other and often overlapping. Against the criticism moved towards relational geography, often accused of 'forc[ing] to adopt a "networks versus territories" scenario' (Jones, 2009, p. 494), in the chapter, I support relationality as a way to integrate, rather than to replace, a territorial understanding of frontiers. Furthermore, while emphasizing the multiple connections and interrelations informing the energy frontier, I eventually argue that such space is no less 'sticky' (Ahmed, 2010) or 'moored' (Urry, 2003), presenting together with an inner liveliness, also a fundamental character of immobility.

The (pipeline) hearing space

Finally, in the context of my main case study - the failed construction of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline (1972-2017) - I identify a third energy geography, namely what I have termed 'the (pipeline) hearing space'. The (pipeline) hearing space is a spatiality produced during the two rounds of community consultation, the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings, accompanying the development of the MVP project. This arena, where indigenous peoples are invited to express their opinion and to voice their concerns about the prospected pipeline, becomes quickly not only a space of appearance, but one of negotiation and potential transformation, where multiple visions of space and time are mobilized, and different power relations are intertwined. As an example of what Simonsen (2007, p. 179) calls 'loci of encounters', the (pipeline) hearing space is one where we experience, quoting Massey (2005, p. 140), 'the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here and now (itself drawing on a history and a geography of thens and theres); and a negotiation which must take place with and between both human and nonhuman'. I argue thus that the (pipeline) hearing space materializes, through aboriginal stories (Cruikshank, 2000), as a politically and emotionally charged spatiality, extending far beyond the community halls where the hearings are held, and both made up of and evoking several and overlapping places and temporalities. In this regard, drawing once again upon Doreen Massey's relational geography, I

approach the MVP community hearings by adopting 'spatiality' or 'space-time' (Massey, 2001) as my main analytical category.

2.5. Analytical framework: Massey's 'space-time'

Edward Soja (1989, p. 12) defines 'spatiality' as a 'triple dialectic of space, time and social being'. In a similar fashion, Doreen Massey (1999) points out how any conceptualization of spatiality needs to recognize that the latter is the product of intersecting relations, and that, in this process, space and time are to be seen as mutually constituted. While not directly referring to literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, Massey's 'space-time' is loosely inspired by Bakhtin's concept of 'chronotope'(1981). Bakhtin describes the 'chronotope' as 'the intrinsic connectedness of the temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature' (p. 84), and uses this concept in order to explore the specificity of literary genres. Similarly, according to Massey (1994, pp. 249-272), while space and time are indeed different from each other (Crang, 2005), they have too often been conceptualized in strictly oppositional terms. Dichotomous understandings of space and time configure one as the absence of the other; that is to say, time as the realm of dynamism and change ("becoming") counterposed to space as that of stasis and permanence ("being"). What Massey emphasizes is that '[this] counterposition (…) makes it difficult to think the social in terms of the real multiplicities of space-time' (p. 268); in other words, it fails to address the social as a myriad of interrelations which are not merely situated in space and time, but which actively contribute to constituting them both. Furthermore, bringing space and time together[25] in the formula as two inherently interrelated social products entails to recognize not only that the spatial is the sphere of heterogeneity, but that this heterogeneity is shared by the temporal as well. As noticed by Massey (2001, p. 259) herself, 'one result of spatializing time (thinking in terms of space-time) is thus also to propose a genuine multiplicity of trajectories'. The main point of this perspective is that both time and space can be experienced, perceived and managed in very different ways, and that this heterogeneity, while often challenging to navigate through, simply reflects the constant process of change that both

[25] It is important to emphasize that, while Massey's contribution to a unified concept of 'space-time' is extremely significant, several authors have indeed produced conceptualizations which stem from the same wish to avoid binary relationships between space and time. Among these, besides already quoted Bakhtin's chronotope (1981) -employed also outside the realm of literary studies and in areas such as legal geography (Valverde, 2015) - it is worth to mention, within Arctic literature, Mark Nuttall's conceptualization of 'memoryscape' (1992) and Frank Sejersen's similar one of 'visionscape' (2004).

time and space are subject to. Such reorientation from "space" and "time" towards 'space-time' prompts, according to Massey, to recognize that our objects of inquiry do not 'occur *in* space and time; it is these relationships themselves which *create/define* space and time' (1994, p. 263). Within the framework of this 'restructured ontology' (Lesh, 2016, p. 460), then, research should address how space and time are diversely produced, and how these productions are underpinned by a complex set of (power) relations.

In light of these considerations, I have decided to adopt 'space-time' as my main analytical category to make sense of the multiple spatial and temporal engagements triggered by oil and gas development in the Canadian North. Specifically, my aim is to explore how 'space' and 'time' are mutually involved in the making of the energy geographies of the petro-nation, the Northwest energy frontier and the (pipeline) hearing space. For this reason, I have chosen to direct my analytical attention towards two objects of inquiry where space and time are discursively (and thus, politically) mobilized: namely, *map-making* and *pipeline community hearings*.

The space-time of maps and of pipeline hearings

I consider maps and map-makers what Dorsch (2013, p. 18) calls 'practices and agents of spacing time or timing space'. Space and time coexist in maps, where multiple and contested places and temporalities are continuously evoked as part of maps' narratives. In his doctoral dissertation, geographer Dennis Wood analysed the maps that American teenagers drew on their first trip to Europe. As he later observed (2014, p. 181), these maps were not only spatially, but also temporally situated:

> As traces of spacetime events (the psychophysical events that resulted in the lines on the paper), the maps could be arbitrarily analysed into spatial or temporal dimensions. I did both. Analysed as space the maps were images of cities; analysed as time the maps were narratives about the kids' experiences.

If space and time are not to be separated, then maps are capable of representing a certain space and, while doing so, of projecting the memories, visions and expectations associated with the latter. Not only a multitude of places, but also of temporalities can be evoked by the same map,

which can function as a testimony or legacy of past (and present) practices, as well as a strategic plan for the future.

Starting from these considerations, I argue that, in the context of Canadian resource development, cartography has massively contributed to maintaining and reproducing the spatial imagination of the Northwest of the country as an 'energy frontier'. In order to support my argument, in Chapter 4, I present a selection of maps and mapping initiatives which, although not always explicitly, have resource extraction in Canada's northwest as their common denominator. While maps are usually understood as spatial representations of the world *here* and *now*, the resource and thematic maps examined in the chapter engage, more often than not, with the spatio-temporal horizon of the *not-yet*, meaning that they visually anticipate geographies (and associated developments) which otherwise would only lie in the realm of potentiality.

Space and time are thus essential elements of maps' visual narratives, i.e. the stories that maps do not only locate, but contribute to telling through their powerful representations (Caquard and Cartwright, 2014). Such stories, however, especially within a complex and continuously changing (energy) landscape such as Canada's Northern one, are not uniquely those told through the lens of government and corporate interests, but also those conveyed through the - too often silenced - voices of the aboriginal people inhabiting the area (Bravo and Sörlin, 2002; Cruikshank, 2000; McCall, 2011). Therefore, through the analysis of the community hearings held during the negotiations of the MVP, I intend to emphasize the fundamental 'multivocality' (Rodman, 1992) of space-time engagements, where indigenous and non-indigenous socio-spatial perspectives and understandings both clash and overlap. In this regard, in Chapter 6 and 7, I use *space-time* as my main analytical category to explore how, within two separate rounds of community consultation - the Berger Inquiry (1974-1977) and the JRP hearings (2006-2007) - the aboriginal people of the Mackenzie Valley[26] engage with issues of space and time, and use spatial and temporal frameworks to formulate their political claims.

Specifically, in Chapter 5, I focus on Dene participation at the Berger Inquiry, to examine how Dene witnesses understand three concepts sharing a fundamental spatial dimension, namely (a)

[26] As noted in the Introduction, I have directed my analytical attention mostly towards the testimonies of the Sahtu Dene and Gwich'in of the Northwest Territories.

the land, (b) the nation and (c) the indigenous space. As I observe, during the Inquiry, political claims are not framed within a fixed timescale or a specific locality, but across a more free-flowing and open-ended spatial and temporal horizon, in which different places, pasts, presents and futures are strategically evoked and conjoined at the same time.

Similarly, in Chapter 6, I seek to explore aboriginal interactions within the very different space-time of the JRP hearings, and compare Dene perspectives on the land thirty years after the Berger Inquiry. In this new setting, even more than before, the hearings' spatial dynamics have to be examined in conjunction with their temporal dimensions and implications. In the JRP hearings, time is in fact conceived as a means to shape conduct, and to direct action towards particular goals and priorities, while simultaneously neglecting others. In this regard, while many of the aboriginal speakers complain that specific temporal regimes have been constantly imposed on them in the past (thus preventing them from creating other opportunities in the present), others emphasize their proven adaptability to change, in the attempt to accelerate time and to make future developments appear more present and tangible.

2.6. Material: archives, access and selection

The power of documents

Many of the studies (Dana, L.P., Meis-Mason, A. and Anderson, R.B., 2008; 2009; Dokis, 2015; Wanvik, 2016) addressing the impacts, risks and potentialities of oil and gas exploration on aboriginal territories have privileged ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interviews, which, while inherently challenging (Jenkins et al., 2015), have acquired popularity both among anthropologists and non-anthropologists[27]. In this sense, my choice of turning to documents might indeed appear quite hazardous, and potentially, not capable of providing the same degree of immediacy and certainty which direct contact with people is often assumed to guarantee. Yet, drawing upon similar efforts carried out mostly (yet not solely) within anthropology (Hull, 2012; Lowenkron and Ferreira, 2014; Navaro-Yashin, 2012; Riles, 2006; Schwenkel, 2015), I want to unravel the profound relevance and analytical potential of documents as both instruments and objects of analysis. The fundamental insight of the literature addressing documents, and particularly bureaucratic documents, is that the latter should cease to be considered as mere tools of decision-making, and rather, should be appreciated for their

[27] Including human geographers (Leeuw, S.D., Cameron, E.S. and Greenwood, M.L., 2012).

'agentive qualities' (Pérez, 2016), i.e. for their ability to constitute 'bureaucratic rules, ideologies, knowledge, practices, subjectivities, objects, outcomes, and even the organizations themselves' (Hull, 2012, p. 253). According to this perspective then, documents are dynamic and imbued with the power to generate relations, knowledge and affective responses (Navaro-Yashin, 2007, 2012; Schwenkel, 2015). This power, specifically, is believed to directly derive from their material and aesthetic qualities, which should therefore be the focus of ethnography.

While I find such efforts towards an appraisal of the materiality of documents extremely meaningful, I am personally interested in simultaneously exploring documents' instrumental and agentive dimensions, without necessarily negating one of the two. In this sense, in connection with Matthew Hull's appeal towards looking 'at' *rather than* 'through' documents (2012), I intend to unravel the analytical possibilities offered by *both* looking at and through documents, thus seeking to maintain with them a constant dialogue.

The documents I refer to throughout the thesis are rather diverse and reflect my wish to approach Canadian oil and gas development as a process informed by different perspectives and interests. However, the two main kinds of documents I examine - maps and transcripts from the MVP community hearings - are both relevant in terms of the spatialities they produce and support, and of the peculiar absence/presence dynamic they are embedded within. With reference to the latter, while maps, as I suggested in the previous section, contribute to the production and representation of the space-time of resource extraction by means of 'silences' (Harley, 1988b) and elusive promises, the transcripts from pipeline community hearings contain not only spatially and temporally situated narratives, but also stories of absences - of wealth, of participation, of development or all of them at once. In the next two sections, I am going to elaborate on issues of selection and access related to these two kinds of material.

Looking *through* maps and looking *at* maps

The maps I present in Chapter 4 are mostly thematic and resource maps showing the routes of oil and gas exploration in the Northwest of Canada. The majority of these maps have been collected at the Library of the University of Alberta (Edmonton, CA) and at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary (CA) during my three-month research stay in Alberta between February and April 2017.

While map-reading and selection were not the only activities I had planned to carry out throughout my stay at the University of Alberta's Humanities Center, they increasingly became

the dominant ones, leading me to spend a great amount of time in the archives of the Cameron Library, and to often engage into very illuminating conversations with the GIS Librarian working there.

Figure 2. Map archive, fourth floor of the Cameron Library, University of Alberta, Edmonton (CA)

I should perhaps underline here that the way I have engaged with maps might be very different from the way political geographers or scholars of critical cartography normally do. I acknowledge that many might identify some gaps either in the amount of information I provide or in my own reading and interpretation of maps. Therefore, it is not my intention to compare my study of cartographic representations of the North to the very detailed, well-grounded and potentially, more comprehensive analyses, such as those of Berit Kristoffersen (2014; 2017), Mia Bennett (2016) or Philip Steinberg (2009). These authors have massively contributed, with their work, to exposing the discourses and political strategies sustained by "official" maps. At the same time, while acknowledging the limitations of my analysis of Northern maps, I nevertheless hope to unravel the rationalities behind these different cartographic efforts, and perhaps, to shed light on other aspects, such as the temporal-affective dimensions of map-making, which have not attracted so much scholarly attention.

Having no background whatsoever in geography meant for me that my first analytical encounter with maps was very disorienting. When I decided to examine federal cartographic efforts in

relation with what I term 'petro-nation-building', I was not quite sure of what I was supposed to look for. All I knew back then was that I wanted to give priority to thematic and resource maps (and mapping initiatives) involved in the spatial representation of oil and gas development in the Northwest of Canada. While not restricting my field of enquiry to a specific period of Canadian extractive history, I still preferred to set the timeframe of the maps somewhere from the early 1970s to nowadays. After having found a list of potentially relevant maps in the online archives of the University of Alberta, I went to the maps section on the fourth floor of the Cameron Library (Figure 2), expecting to open the heavy drawers of the file cabinets, pull out the dusty maps, and somehow, have all the answers. I was soon disappointed. Although I had read multiple accounts on the narrative power of maps, those maps with their lines, dots and symbols were certainly not speaking to me. Needless to say, I got quickly frustrated, and tempted to end abruptly my cartographic journey. Yet, the more I probed into the works of critical cartographers, the more I started to realize that the reasons why those maps seemed so obscure and not particularly significant had to be traced precisely in their technical jargon, in the (apparent) objectivity of their content and in the lack of any explicit sign of manipulation. In this sense, technical elements such as the choice of colors, the drawing of lines and the use of different scales were those which soon became the most revelatory of the discourses underlying each cartographic experiment. I began to interrogate the choices made in the maps and to focus on both what they were showing and, even more, on what they were omitting. Furthermore, for each map I was reading, I also began to investigate the historical and political context in which it was produced and distributed, by collecting information about the map-makers, and attempting to trace the broader plans, visions and strategies they were supporting.

While not all the maps I eventually incorporate in the chapter focus explicitly on the Northwest of Canada[28], I argue that many of them - through their apparent objectivity and lack of prioritization - are indeed aimed not only at perpetuating stereotypical representations of this space as a cold and isolated wilderness, but at encouraging a specific kind of economic and political development in the portrayed areas. In this sense, what I have sought to trace is the

[28] Such as the maps contained in the thematic collection 'Energy', part of the 5th Edition of the National Atlas of Canada.

ability of maps both *to represent*, and *to produce* and maintain particular spatial imaginaries and spatial configurations - in this case, the Northwest energy frontier - and to do so by actively 'arrang[ing] people around themselves' (Hull, 2012, p. 134).

While maps are the main material I analyze in Chapter 4, I also pay attention to 'the work that went into their making', i.e. specific mapping initiatives. Drawing upon similar post-representational efforts (Kitchin, R., Gleeson, J. and Dodge, M. 2013; Navaro-Yashin, 2012) at the end of the chapter, I unravel the ambiguity of a huge mapping initiative, namely the 'Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals' (GEM), ran by the Government of Canada between 2008 and 2020.

Overall, the way I have approached, selected and analyzed the maps included in the chapter has been constantly informed by a deeper acknowledgement of the (simultaneously) *instrumental* and *productive* value of such documents. While thematic and resource maps of the Northwest energy frontier can indeed be considered fundamental 'government technologies' (Foucault et al., 1991) meant to circulate and reproduce specific socio-spatial imaginaries and discourses, their materiality - the lines, the dots, the names and all the details which are included (as well as those which are ruled out) - is equally significant, and itself constitutive of multiple and contrasting space-time(s), relations, subjectivities, and affects.

Transcripts of the MVP community hearings

The case study of this thesis, the MVP, constitutes an example of what Jonathan Peyton (2017, p. 358), through the notion of 'unbuilt environments' (Oberdeck, 2005), describes as 'unrealized megaprojects to be recovered through archival evidence'. While the MVP was never built, the negotiations accompanying its development produced throughout the years a great variety of material, including industry plans, policy documents, reports, maps, hearing transcripts, newspaper articles, etc.

For the purposes of this work, namely to investigate the spatial and temporal dynamics triggered by oil and gas development in the North over the last fifty years, I focus on the experiences, the understandings and the voices of the aboriginal people - mostly Dene - living in the Mackenzie Valley, and thus most directly involved in the MVP negotiations. As a result, I direct my analytical attention towards a specific arena of encounter and confrontation, namely the community hearings which were held throughout the North in order to assess the social and

environmental impacts of the pipeline on Northern residents. While different hearings[29] have been conducted since the early pipeline proposals, I will be looking at the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings due to their comparative potential, to their significant impact on future developments in the North, besides - for more practical reasons - due to the broader availability of archival evidence in their regard. While different authors have integrated extracts from the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings in their works[30], none of them addresses the testimonies so extensively in their content, and attempts to frame the narratives unfolding within the testimonies as fundamental questions of space and time.

Figure 3. Hearing transcripts from the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry,
Institute of Arctic Studies, Copenhagen University (April 2016).

[29] From October 1975 - in parallel with the Berger Inquiry - and until 1977, the National Energy Board (NEB) conducted hearings to evaluate the applications for the MVP (Bregha, 1979). Similarly, between January and December 2006, the NEB began public hearings to look into the technical and economic aspects of the project.
[30] For the Berger Inquiry, some of the major contributions are to be found in the works of Mark Nuttall (2010, 2014), Francis Abele (2014), Glen Coulthard (2014), Kirk N. Lambrecht (2013) and Brent Ryan Bellamy (2016). For the JRP Hearings, the works of Carly Dokis (2015), Mark Nuttall (2008) and Pamela Stern (2007) constitute the main points of reference.

Both the transcripts from the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings constitute what is traditionally termed 'secondary data', i.e. 'data that was collected by someone else for another primary purpose' (Johnston, 2017, p. 619). I first approached the transcripts from the Berger Inquiry in 2014, during a two-month stay at the Section of Eskimology and Arctic Studies at the University of Copenhagen. At that time, I was writing my master thesis on Danish and Canadian laws and policies with regard to indigenous people's participation in extractive activities, and I came to Copenhagen to dig into the unique collection of material at the Polar Library, as well as to benefit from the expertise of the Arctic scholars working at the Institute. The transcripts of the formal hearings of the Berger Inquiry were packed into a stack of dusty boxes stored in the loft, which took me several weeks to move down to my office, and to finally start delving into. When I began to write my PhD, I decided to focus on the community hearings, and thus to turn to the digital version of the transcripts, available in the online archives of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Yellowknife, NWT)[31]. Although I was already fairly familiar with many of the testimonies presented at the Inquiry, I knew very little about more recent testimonies, such as those presented at the JRP hearings in the early 2000s. Nevertheless, I must admit that for quite long time throughout the first year of my PhD, I naively believed that I would be able to retrieve the transcripts from these testimonies just as easily as I had done with the older ones. The process of recollection proved soon to be much more demanding than expected, forcing me eventually to collect a digital copy of the JRP hearing transcripts at the Library of the National Energy Board in Calgary (CA) during my research stay in Alberta in 2017.

While access and copyright are rather common issues that any researcher who deals with archive evidence has to face, I would like now to share some considerations on other kinds of issues which might arise when analysing secondary data. The two main ones identified by several studies in this regard (Coltart, C., Henwood, K. and Shirani, F., 2013; Dale, A., Arber, S. and Procter, M., 1988; Hammersley, 2010; Irwin and Winterton, 2011; Mitchell, 2015) are: 1) the lack of control over the data which might not fit the research questions, and 2) the lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the circumstances and thus the quality of data collection. Although both the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearing transcripts seemed quite accurate, not many revelatory details regarding, for example, pauses or body language were provided. As a

[31] Full reference in the bibliography.

result, throughout my analysis, I often turned to what I like to consider "helpers", namely to those accounts from other scholars (and non-scholars) who directly witnessed the MVP consultation process. Among these, the two main ones which have constituted for me invaluable sources of information are Patrick Scott's *Stories Told* (2007) for the Berger Inquiry, and Carly Dokis's amazing work *Where the Rivers Meet* (2015) for the JRP hearings. Besides offering some extremely vivid and articulated recollections of the Dene testimonies presented at the two rounds of hearings, these books have also helped me tackle another key issue of my archival research; namely, the need to navigate through a tremendously extensive amount of material[32].

In the last four years, I have gone through thousands of pages of transcripts, of which the extracts quoted in this thesis constitute only a very small selection. Thanks to their specific focus on Dene participation at the hearings, I have thus drawn upon the works of Carly Dokis and Patrick Scott to select those testimonies which seemed most relevant for the purposes of my analysis and thus to be included in my final dataset. In this regard, it is generally acknowledged that both the selection of data and the analysis of the latter always entail an act of scaling by the researcher, who makes active choices by privileging some sources rather than others, and by placing the material within specific analytical frameworks. As observed by Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 141), 'our influences on the sort of data we collect and what we do with them, and our hypotheses about what our data are telling us, pervade the conduct of research'. In the selection and analysis of the hearing transcripts, I have undoubtedly directed my attention towards those testimonies which I have found more "eloquent" than others in their discursive engagements with space and time. At the same time, documents - as people - are often unpredictable and might "talk back" differently than how we expected. Therefore, although, for the purposes of my analysis, I did focus on the formulation of concepts such as 'land', 'nation', 'past' and 'future', I also attempted not to force my understanding of these concepts upon the speakers, preferring to approach them as in a process of constant production, rather than as some fixed and immutable knowledge. Furthermore, while many similarities among the ways in which people speak about and strategically mobilize space and time have indeed emerged throughout my analysis, I have also sought to unravel the antagonisms, the clashes and the ambivalences surrounding space-time

[32] The Berger Inquiry amounted to over 30,000 pages of evidence, assembled into 283 volumes. Similarly, the JRP hearings produced over 11,000 pages of transcripts.

engagements. Although I am not quite sure whether I succeeded in this attempt, what I might have gained of this analytical approach - the details of which I am going to explain in the next section - is that, by probing into the speakers' words, I sometimes felt like the distance between me and the transcripts was getting shorter. I heard the voices of the witnesses, was often touched by them, and they spoke to me as well - although not always how I expected, and in much more uncanny and obscure ways.

2.7. Methods: genealogy and critical discourse analysis

While maps and hearing transcripts undoubtedly constitute the main material of this thesis, I often draw upon different sources in order to better understand the historical, political and economic context in which the construction of the MVP has developed. In this regard, other relevant sources include official speeches of prime ministers and ministers, newspaper articles documenting the progress of the project, extracts from diaries of explorers, and scientific reports on early petroleum discoveries. Most of this material has been retrieved online, at the Polar Library of the University of Copenhagen, and at the archives of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary (CA).

In spite of their diversity, these sources together contribute to enriching my investigation of how the "not there" and the "not yet" are discursively produced and performed by the different actors of Canadian oil and gas development. In this sense, rather than taking identities, places and temporalities as given, I am interested in unraveling how these are constantly negotiated by Canadian government, extractive industry and indigenous peoples through visual and verbal communication. In order to do so, I mostly draw upon concepts and methods typical of or to a certain degree ascribable to discourse analysis.

Although no singular definition of the term 'discourse' exists, it can be defined as 'an institutionalised way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power' (Link, 1983, p.60 as quoted and translated in Wodak and Meyer, 2013, p. 45). In a complex and continuously changing context such as the one of Canadian resource extraction, it is far from unproblematic to identify a specific set of discourses, as well as to clearly distinguish who subscribes to or actively shapes one discourse rather than another. Therefore, what I intend to constantly draw the reader's attention on is the deeper ambiguity of the narratives and the

discourses surrounding the construction of energy megaprojects. In the long series of negotiations which accompany such endeavors, I argue that power circulates - more or less visibly - through specific words and images, which deeply affect the visions, the expectations and the actions of so-called "pipeline stakeholders". As I am going to illustrate in what follows, I will unfold and explore the intentions behind these different kinds of storytelling, by using a variety of methodological approaches somewhat inspired by discursive genealogy and critical discourse analysis.

Discursive genealogy of the "petro-narratives" (Chapter 3)

In Chapter 3, I elaborate a discursive genealogy (Dean, 1992; Foucault, 1978a; Koopman, 2013) of the different narratives - which I have termed "petro-narratives" - used to justify and encourage hydrocarbon exploration in Canada, and especially in the North of the country. In the *Dictionary of Human Geography*, genealogy is defined as 'a mode of historical enquiry that seeks to trace the emergence and descent of terms and categories, and the interrelation of power and knowledge in their deployment' (Gregory et al., 2011, pp. 270-271). In this sense, genealogy - as a methodological approach concerned with the reciprocal constitution of both discursive and material elements (Anaïs, 2013) - helps me understand *when, how* and *why* oil and gas exploration has become not only an activity deeply rooted into Canadian history, but a fundamental element in the construction of a national identity.

Throughout my inquiry, I draw upon similar attempts by other scholars to carry out a discursive genealogy of the narratives employed within the extractive and energy sector (Gunster and Saurette, 2014; Jorgensen, 2014; Katz-Rosene, 2016; Le Meur and Banaré, 2014; Mitchell, 2011; Riofrancos, 2017). The analytical value of such approach lies in its ability to illuminate how various notions of resources, nation and future are discursively produced, according to changing political and economic priorities. Furthermore, by unraveling the intentions underlying the rhetorical legitimation of oil and gas development, the genealogical analysis also makes the identification between hydrocarbon exploration and Canadian nation-building explicit. In this regard, I also use the discursive genealogy of petro-narratives in Chapter 3 as an input to the following chapter (Chapter 4) which addresses such process more extensively through the theoretical lens of technological nationalism (Charland, 1986).

Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) directs its attention towards the use of language in a given context, and is mainly interested in bringing to light and exploring how discourse and wider relations of power are deeply entangled and co-produced (Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2015). In fact, according to CDA, discourse not only reflects social relations, but is itself responsible for establishing and maintaining such relations. Starting from these premises, CDA aims to expose the 'particular presuppositions, meanings, ideologies and intentions' (Paltridge, 2012, p. 191), which are behind every use of language.

Although CDA does not provide a precise methodology, I have found Norman Fairclough's textually-oriented discourse analysis particularly effective in providing a valuable operational tool. Before explaining how I am going to employ CDA throughout Chapters 7 and 8, I believe it necessary to start by unpacking some of the terminology used by Norman Fairclough and which I am also going to mention in the chapters. Fairclough (2013, p. 95) refers to 'discursive events' to indicate 'instances of language use, analysed as text, discursive practice, social practice'. Text, discursive practice and social practice are thus the three dimensions of discursive events, where text is 'the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event' and 'discursive practice' corresponds to the 'production, distribution and consumption of the text'. In many of his works such as *Language and Power* (1989), *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a) and *Critical Discourse Analysis* (2013), Fairclough emphasizes the necessity of combining both a focus on the linguistic dimensions of discursive events, and on the political/social/institutional context where such events take place. Specifically, with regard to the aspect of 'discursive practice', Fairclough notices how producers of a text always rely on already existing texts either to reproduce or challenge the status quo. Inspired by previous studies of Kristeva (1986), he calls this relationship between texts 'intertextuality' (Fairclough, 1992b) [33].

Applying Fairclough's textual analysis to the pipeline hearings (Chapter 6 and 7)

Concerning the more operational elements of CDA, Fairclough introduces a three-dimensional framework (2013, p. 92) which can help in the analysis of any piece of communication. Such

[33] Intertextuality is together with interdiscursivity - i.e. 'the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres' (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 148) - a constitutive part of the discursive practice.

framework is composed of three steps, which recall the definitions abovementioned: a) *text analysis* (i.e. examination of the linguistic features of the text); b) *analysis of discursive practices* (i.e. focus on the processes related to the production and consumption of the text), and c) *social analysis* (i.e. investigation of the socio-historical circumstances governing these processes)[34].

While undoubtedly recognizing the validity of Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA, I must stress that I do not intend to adhere to his systematic approach, which I prefer to regard as a guide and source of inspiration, rather than a strict set of rules to follow. I will try to elaborate on this choice.

The central question guiding my analysis of the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings is how aboriginal - and specifically Dene - participants at the community hearings discursively engage with the 'space-time' (Massey, 2001). What I am interested in is tracing how, within the testimonies, several and overlapping spaces and temporalities are not only constructed and evoked, but used by the speakers in order to frame wider issues of power and legitimation. Although acknowledging the limitations of textual analysis, especially in the wider framework of CDA, I nevertheless believe in the value of employing it as my overarching approach to analyze selected Dene testimonies at the two hearings. In order to do so, I mostly draw upon the set of questions provided by Fairclough in *Language and Power* (1989, 110-112), focusing on aspects such as vocabulary, grammar and textual structures. While the location of the textual analysis in the general layout of the chapters will always be quite distinguishable, the position (or sometimes even the inclusion) of the other two steps, namely the analysis of discursive practices - such as, for instance, the recurrence of intertextuality - and the social analysis, will often be less evident. This decision has to be seen in connection with my broader aspiration towards building an analytical framework which is *inspired by*, rather than directly borrowed from Fairclough's CDA. The motivation for this choice stems from two analytical priorities, namely 1) to provide a possibly deeper understanding of the power dynamics underpinning aboriginal testimonies and, accordingly, 2) to open up for a higher degree of hybridity, which, in my case, has meant not to exclude the possibility of less obvious and thus more creative frameworks of analysis[35].

[34] Each of these steps further corresponds to the three stages of CDA, namely *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation.*

[35] In this regard, in Chapter 6, following similar efforts of other scholars, I draw inspiration from a different approach to discourse analysis, namely Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (2001).

Regarding the first point, in particular, while CDA aims at unveiling the power structures behind discursive productions, it might also be seen as limited by its own focus on - and subsequent will to eradicate - the unequal power relations created and reproduced by discourse. In this regard, rather than adhering to what risks to be an overly deterministic view of social relations, I am more interested in exploring how marginalized groups constantly negotiate (power) relations, and how they simultaneously produce, contest and, very often, fail to fit into specific discourses. What CDA has therefore encouraged me to carry out is an 'exploration of the incorporation of space itself as a tool in the exercise of power' (Jones et al., 2014, p. 12), starting from the premise that space - just as time - should not be seen as fixed, but under continuous transformation, and thus diversely perceived, experienced and scaled by different actors. In this sense, to "critically" engage with the Dene testimonies through the analytical lens of 'space-time' has increasingly entailed for me to reflect upon two aspects: namely, 1) the various opportunities and constraints of the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings as two different spaces of consultation and negotiation; and 2) the inherent heterogeneity and overlap of the narratives, positions and priorities articulated by the indigenous participants at the hearings. These two aspects combined have led me to observe how, in the negotiation of the MVP, power (un)balances, while persistently and intensely exposed by the speakers, might be eventually much harder to grasp, simultaneously generating from and involving not only the relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal subjects, but also those among different aboriginal groups or even within the same community.

Chapter 3. Petro-narratives. A brief history of Canadian oil and gas development.

Introduction: a plurality of stories and perspectives

In the last two decades, the Arctic has attained a whole new political and economic prominence, finding itself at the center of a global debate over a diverse set of issues, including climate change, energy development, indigenous rights and many others. In particular, due to the rising energy demands and, at the same time, to the progressive decrease of the ice levels, the discussion of the possible benefits as well as of the risks of hydrocarbon extraction has achieved a high significance (if not a predominance) in the circumpolar agenda. However, in spite of the recent growth of attention, oil and gas exploration has indeed a long history in the Arctic region and especially, in the North of Canada. Since the early days of fur trading, Canada's economy has been based on the exploitation and export of raw materials. Quite interestingly, it was during the expeditions undertaken by the European traders that the first stories on the presence of oil in the North started to circulate.

In what follows, I am going to briefly review Canadian history of oil and gas development from the early explorations to nowadays, by attempting not only to identify the most significant events in this regard, but to emphasize the importance of *storytelling* in the formation, circulation and reproduction of Canada's petro-history. Initially spread as a mere rumour, and then progressively turned into first-person experiences evocatively described in the explorers' journals, the "story" (and not simply the "history") of oil and gas exploration, by passing from mouth to mouth - or from page to page - has been told in many different ways, and has therefore taken on many different forms.

Drawing upon translation theorist Mona Baker (2006, p. 5), who defines narratives as 'public and personal "stories" that we subscribe to and that guide our behaviour', I suggest that what I have here termed *petro-narratives* - i.e. the stories which have been used to make meaning of and eventually justify hydrocarbon exploration and extraction - offer a particularly useful analytical lens, through which to look at Canadian oil and gas history. Therefore, in line with similar studies which have explored the different narratives employed within the extractive

sector (Gunster and Saurette, 2014; Jorgensen, 2014; Katz-Rosene, 2016; Le Meur and Banaré, 2014; Mitchell, 2011; Riofrancos, 2017), I elaborate a discursive genealogy (Dean, 1992; Foucault, 1978a; Koopman, 2013) of the petro-narratives. Such historical inquiry, while admittedly not very extended, is aimed at tracing *when, how* and *why* oil and gas exploration has become not only a strategic Canadian business, but a fundamental element in the construction of a national identity. In this regard, throughout the chapter, I identify five main petro-narratives, namely what I term 1) the petro-narrative of exploration; 2) the scientific petro-narrative, 3) the petro-narrative of crisis, 4) the nationalist petro-narrative and finally, 5) the petro-narrative of care and development. Each of this narrative has contributed to framing (while seeking to promote) oil and gas development respectively as a story of discovery and wonder, a story of scientific achievement, a story of heroism and braveness, and, especially from the 1950s, as a national story.

In spite of being presented in a chronological progression, according to the period during which each narrative has developed and has been most extensively employed, the petro-narratives should not be seen as "frozen in time", but, rather, as sharing multiple similarities, and thus, often overlapping with each other. In this regard, I argue that common to all of them is a constant, although diverse, engagement with the "not there" and the "not yet". In fact, the general state of uncertainty and excitement surrounding Canadian hydrocarbon exploration has pushed explorers, geologists, businessmen and governments to frantically pursue a quest for resources, often relying more on the expectation of discovery rather than on its concrete occurrence. Interestingly, especially in more recent times, the promissory quality typical of extractive endeavours has taken a very different, and potentially more ambiguous shape, meaning that hydrocarbon exploration and extraction is no longer (or at least not only) narrated as a promise of jobs, prosperity or growth, but as a promise of a greener and more sustainable future.

3.1. The first discoveries (1700s) and the petro-narrative of exploration

The first written records on the presence of hydrocarbons in Canadian territories date back to 1715. One year before, at Fort York (today's Manitoba), the chief trader and explorer from the Hudson Bay's Company James Knight had met a Chipewyan (Dene) woman from the Athabasca Valley named Thanadelthur, who had told him about a great abundance of 'yellow metal'

(probably copper) and bitumen in the rivers beyond the Bay. A post contained in Knight's journal (quoted in Sweeny, 2010, p. 32) and dated September 27, 1715, reports: 'they tell me there is a certain gum or pitch that runs down the river in such abundance that they cannot land except in certain places'. Few years later, Henri Kelsey, another fur trader, wrote that a Cree brought him a sample 'of that gum or pitch that flows out of the banks of the river' (quoted in Bott, 2004, p. 13), namely, what would be the worldwide known Athabascan tar sands. However, decades had to pass before Euro-Canadians could directly observe the sands.

Quite interestingly, this happened almost accidentally, when fur was still the main economic interest of the majority of traders and explorers traveling through the country. Peter Pond (Gates et al., 1965), the very first European to watch the oil-saturated sand deposits, succeeded in doing so while crossing the Athabasca watershed, in search of new animal pelts to expand his business. In the 18th century, Pond's expedition was considered pioneering and paved the way to many others, most notably Scottish explorer Alexander Mackenzie. Mackenzie was Peter Pond's partner in the North West Company (one of the main fur trade companies operating in the North) and did undoubtedly feel the fascination of Pond's tales on the 'bitume' seeping out of the ground along the river banks (Innis, 1930, p. 25). It was therefore what I will call here a *petro-narrative of exploration*, a story of curiosity and excitement about the rich resources of the area, that encouraged Mackenzie to travel to Lake Athabasca and led him to finally 'encounter' the oil sands. In a journal post dating back to 1788, Alexander Mackenzie (1801, p. 133) describes the sands as:

> bituminous fountains into which a pole of twenty feet long may be inserted without the least resistance. The bitumen is in a fluid state, and when mixed with gum or the resinous substance collected from the Spruce Fir, serves to gum the canoes. In its heated state it emits a smell like that of Sea Coal. The banks of the river, which are there very elevated, discover veins of the same bituminous quality.

Only one year later, in 1789, he will become the first European to notice oil (or at least, what will be then known as 'oil') seeping from the ground of the area that would soon be at the center of an energy boom, namely Norman Wells. Besides the surprise and the enthusiasm deriving from the discoveries, the journals of Alexander Mackenzie, Peter Pond and of the other traders before them also reveal the presence of another fundamental actor during the early years of petroleum

history: the 'Indians'[36]. More than sixty years before the first explorers penetrated into the Athabasca Valley and directly opened this region for development, aboriginal people were already using the tar residues to seal and waterproof their canoes, often mixing it with tree sap and other substances (Bott, 2004). Therefore, when these groups came into contact with the traders and the explorers, they began to show the latter their every day practices and routines, and to share with them information on the river flows, and on what was hiding along the banks. These stories most likely contributed to exercising some kind of fascination on Pond, Mackenzie and the others, and, increasingly appropriated by non-Native voices, became a fundamental component of the petro-narrative of exploration, as well as a major encouragement to venture further North.

3.2. The early petroleum industry (1800s) and the emergence of the scientific petro-narrative

Discoveries like the one described by Alexander Mackenzie became more and more common in the 19th century. As a result of the increasing interest in minerals and hydrocarbons and after the first reports on oil seepages in Southern Canada (Ontario), entrepreneur Charles Tripp founded the International Mining and Manufacturing Company, the first registered oil company in North America. Few years later, the company - mainly producing asphalt - was sold to James Miller Williams, considered by many the father of Canadian petroleum history (Markus, 2014; May, 1998; Vassiliou, 2009). Williams, a manufacturer of railway carriages from Hamilton, Ontario, designed his own system of oil digging, and in 1858 hand-dug and cribbed a well more than 15-meter deep in Oil Springs, Ontario, which became the first oil well in North America, i.e. the Williams No.1. What followed afterwards would be remembered as the earliest oil boom of Canadian history, which saw entrepreneurs setting up refineries all around Ontario's wells, and even a town being erected within the oilfield: Petrolia.

In 1880, sixteen Ontario producing and refining companies decided to merge to form the Imperial Oil Limited, bound to become one of the biggest oil companies in North America and worldwide. To better understand the oil frenzy characterizing the second half of the 19th century, we need to go back a few decades, and specifically to 1842, when Canada's first scientific

[36] The term Indians is hereby used in connection with the usage of the term made by Alexander Mackenzie in his diaries.

agency charged with examining the presence of coal and other minerals in Canadian subsoil was established: the Geological Survey of Canada. This event, which undoubtedly represented a landmark for North American natural resources research, holds an important place in Canada's petroleum history. I suggest in fact that the establishment of the Geological Survey marked the beginning of a new narrative of extraction, which I will call hereon the *scientific petro-narrative,* where scientific research was used as an authoritative source to legitimize hydrocarbon exploration. A particular significant year, in this regard, is 1875, when the first government-sponsored geological study of the oil sands was carried out by geologists John Macoun and A.R.C. Selwyn, who both reported that almost inexhaustible quantities of petroleum were to be found in the Athabasca region (Fumoleau, 2004).

On the wave of enthusiasm generated by the discoveries, the following years experienced a huge increase in government expeditions and scientific reports[37], which eventually led to the formation of a Senate Committee, specifically appointed to investigate the value of the territory north of Saskatchewan watershed and between the Rocky Mountains and Hudson Bay. As a result of the evaluation, the Committee issued some very optimistic reports, which all described the area as hosting vast deposits of minerals and hydrocarbons, especially oil. The remarks presented by the Survey's geologist John Macoun are in this sense particularly revelatory of the atmosphere of promise and excitement surrounding the explorations. In the Committee's third report (quoted in Nelson, 1893, pp. 76-77), Macoun proudly depicts the Athabasca and Mackenzie Valley as 'the most extensive petroleum field in America, if not in the world'. In addition, he later observes:

> the uses of petroleum and consequently the demand for it by all nations are increasing at such rapid ratio, that it is probable this great petroleum field will assume an enormous value in the near future and will rank among the chief assets comprised in the Crown Domain of the Dominion.

The reason why this passage is especially interesting and, as I suggest, emblematic of the *scientific petro-narrative* lies in the fact that Macoun is not only providing some objective data concerning the availability of oil reserves of the area, but is - although not necessarily

[37] See for example geologist Robert Bell's 1883 Report on the Athabasca Region or the studies carried out by geologist R.G. McConnell in 1890 and 1891 estimating the presence of 4,700 million tons of tar in the same region.

consciously - projecting a specific vision of the future or, better said, of the *petro-future* ahead. In this sense, with regard to the optimism pervading the first reports filed by the Canadian Geological Survey, Native Studies' scholar Richard Price (1999, p. 60) underlines that 'these [reports] seem to have been part of the government propaganda of the time to convince potential settlers and businessmen that Canada had just much room for future expansion and development as the United States, whose potential had recently been receiving widespread public notice'. As I am going to further elaborate on in the next chapter, through my analysis of resource/thematic maps in connection with nation building and frontier-making, apparently "neutral" bureaucratic/technical documents such as Macoun's report can be regarded instead as deeply productive: not only of knowledge, but also of specific emotional, political and institutional responses.

3.3. From Norman Wells to Leduc: the petro-narrative of crisis (1900-1950s)

In the late 19th century, southern oil industry experienced production decline, which led Canadian oil companies to rely more on imported US crude oil as a supplement. At the same time, expeditions continued in the area around the Mackenzie River basin. At the beginning of the 20th century, geologists were still relying on the support of aboriginal people to conduct their exploratory studies. It is at some point in this period that, during an expedition in the proximity of Fort Norman (known today as Tulita), local Dene people guided a group of scientists to Legohli, a place which in Dene language can be literally translated in 'where the oil is' (Mikkelsen and Langhelle, 2008, p. 174).

In between the two centuries, poet, fur trader and recording secretary Charles Mair, who was travelling with the David Leary Expedition, ventured in an exploration journey of the Athabasca region. After his steamer docked at Fort McMurray, as Alexander Mackenzie and Robert Bell before him, Mair had his first encounter with the tar sands, which, in his book 'Through the Mackenzie Basin: A Narrative of the Athabasca and Peace River Expedition of 1899', he describes as 'the most interesting region in all the North' (1908, p. 121). In this dense and somehow prophetic narrative, Mair (ibid.) writes:

> This region is stored with a substance of great economic value is beyond all doubt, and, when the hour of development comes, it will, I believe, prove to be one of the wonders of Northern

> Canada. We were all deeply impressed by this storehouse of not only hidden but exposed resources we possess in this enormous country. What is unseen can only be conjectured; but what is seen would make any region famous.

As Anna Tsing observes in her fascinating essay *Inside the Economy of Appearances* (2000, p. 118), 'in speculative enterprises, profit must be imagined before it can be extracted', referring here to the tendency of turning potential places of investment into 'spectacle', in order to attract capital. In this sense, I find Charles Mair's words particularly emblematic to understand how the "not there" and "not yet" of oil are discursively mobilized as part of a specific performance aimed at promoting further hydrocarbon explorations. By describing the oil sands in terms of presence/absence - quoting the extract, as a hidden/exposed 'wonder' - Mair manages to turn the potential value of the sands (or, rather, the mere speculation around it) into an extremely tangible reality. The gap between the 'seen' and the 'unseen' is, in this sense, skillfully transformed from an actual constraint to the classification of the oil sands as a "resource" into a visionary challenge, which requires a reactive temporal disposition. Further exploration through the Athabasca is thus presented as a unique opportunity, which needs to be pursued by means of quick, impulsive and bold decisions.

However, in spite of the optimism of Mair and the others, developing Athabascan oil sands seemed, at that time, both difficult and costly (Nikiforuk, 2010). For this reason, in the early 1900s, oil sands explorations had to be temporarily put on a hold, while, due to the conversion of naval fleets from coal to oil, Canadian oil production was forced a sudden acceleration. It is in this period, precisely around 1914, that a British geologist, T.O. Bosworth, was commissioned by two Calgary businessmen to lead an expedition to assess the petroleum potential of northern Alberta and of the Mackenzie Basin. In his *Report on the Prospect of Obtaining Oil in the Regions of the Mackenzie River, Great Slave Lake, Slave River and Athabasca River* (as quoted in McKenzie-Brown, 1998), Bosworth identified three regions embedded with high prospects of obtaining oil, namely the Mackenzie River between Old Fort Good Hope and Fort Norman, the Tar Springs District on the Great Slave Lake and the Tar Sand District on the Athabasca River. Besides providing some very concise and accurate descriptions of the geological and chemical structure of the rocks and of the shales in the NWT, Bosworth's report is particularly significant for another reason, namely because, having been commissioned

by two private investors, it is underpinned by a significant interest in the investment opportunities offered by the region. In this sense, the following extracts from the report (as quoted in McKenzie-Brown, 2010, p. 6), where Bosworth directs a personal advice to his Calgary business clients, might be particularly revealing:

> The remarkable series of Bituminous Shales and Limestones, of such thickness and of such richness contains the material from which a vast amount of petroleum might be generated and might pass into an overlying porous rock. It is admirable as an oil generation formation (…) To avoid all competition, I strongly advise that you form a controlling company or syndicate containing the most influential men. I recommend particularly that you arrange matters in such a way that it would be to the obvious advantage of every oil man to join you, and that you freely provide the opportunity so that the Company may include every man who wishes to venture anything in the exploitation of the oilfields of the North.

Bosworth's expedition and the report resulting from the latter can be framed within that scientific petro-narrative, whose main features, as I have previously suggested, extended far beyond the mere collection and circulation of geological data of the Canadian subsoil. By combining technical data with precise instructions on how to organize and pursue extractive endeavours, the scientific petro-narrative was ultimately used to legitimize and concretely speed up further expeditions in the North. In this regard, according to historian McKenzie-Brown (ibid.), Bosworth's report, thanks to its technical accuracy and to the appeal of the predictions contained into it, proved to be particularly effective in generating interest also among other geologists, including famous Imperial Oil's chief geologist Ted Link. Link - who will since then be considered a nearly mythical figure of Canadian petro-history - decided to trust Bosworth's story and to follow his route; a choice which eventually led him to become one of the main contributors to the development of the area around Norman Wells. After having acquired the stakes by Bosworth, Imperial Oil started exploratory drilling in 1919 and after few months, oil was finally hit in Norman Wells in the August of 1920. To secure its control on the area, Imperial Oil started immediately to stake many claims, but the market was still far too weak, and the discovery, regardless of how ground-breaking, resulted only in the construction of a small refinery to supply local missions, mines and downriver communities.

Still a few decades had to pass before a dramatic event urged Canadian oil industry to accelerate its production: war. When America got involved in WWII, as a response to Japanese attack against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor in 1941, it became an absolute necessity to provide oil to the Pacific Fleet. After Japan took control of some of Alaska's Aleuthian islands, in the fear that their oil tankers might be targeted and sunk by Japanese submarines, Americans started to look for more reliable and safer oil supplies, which, at that time, were to be found in the Canadian North, and more precisely, at Norman Wells. In this new apocalyptic scenario, a new petro-narrative emerged, namely what I have termed here a *petro-narrative of crisis* (or 'heroic petro-narrative').

I argue that this narrative is characterized by a powerful emotional component (pathos) which is used to endow what used to be a mere business venture with a *heroic* connotation. Through this new perspective, oil extraction becomes the ultimate act of braveness of the West (United States and Canada) against the destructive fury of the East (Japan). Thanks to the rhetoric power of the petro-narrative of crisis, during the Second World War, oil started to be presented not only as an object of scientific study and/or as an opportunity of economic development, but as a military resource, an instrument of defence and a necessity of warfare. A different kind of legitimation and urgency is thus introduced. Strategically placed into a whole new affective domain - moving from wonder and euphoria to hope, pride and anxiety - the *petro-narrative of crisis* progressively glorified oil companies and their workers as war heroes, and created or further reinforced solidarity links between the two main oil-producers of the time: United States and Canada. In this sense, the long-standing antagonism and competition over resources characterizing Canada-United States relations was, at least temporarily, set aside.

One of the key events of this period - and direct expression of the petro-narrative of crisis - was the construction, under an agreement between the government of Canada and the government of the United States, of an oil pipeline - the so-called CANOL project (Ueda, Garfield and Haynes, 1977). The pipeline was meant to carry oil from the field in Norman Wells (NWT) to Whitehorse (Yukon), where the material would then be refined and finally transported to Fairbanks (Alaska) through a second pipeline.

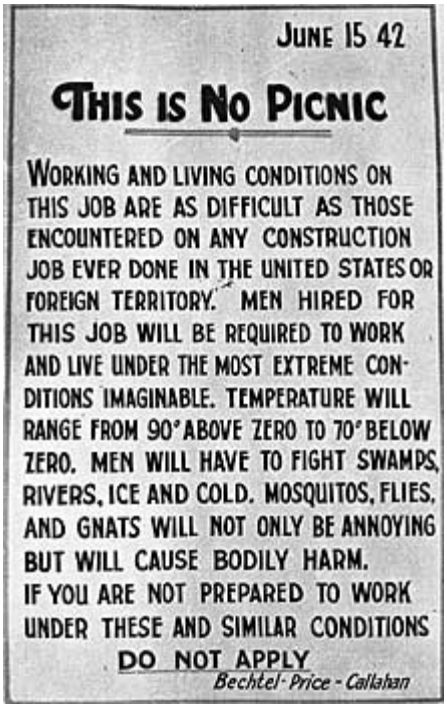


Figure 4. Richard Finnie, Photographer. Yukon Archives. Finnie Family Fonds, 81/21 #43, Pho 140 -

The project, started in 1943, was immediately presented by the construction company Bechtel-Price-Callahan as a tough venture, in which, due to the harsh conditions of the environment and the cold Arctic weather, only few brave men could embark (Figure 4 and Figure 5). As emphatically described by historian and film producer Richard Finnie (1945, p. 1) in his book dedicated to the pipeline, ‘Canol is an epic of the North (…) but Canol is also a war story’.

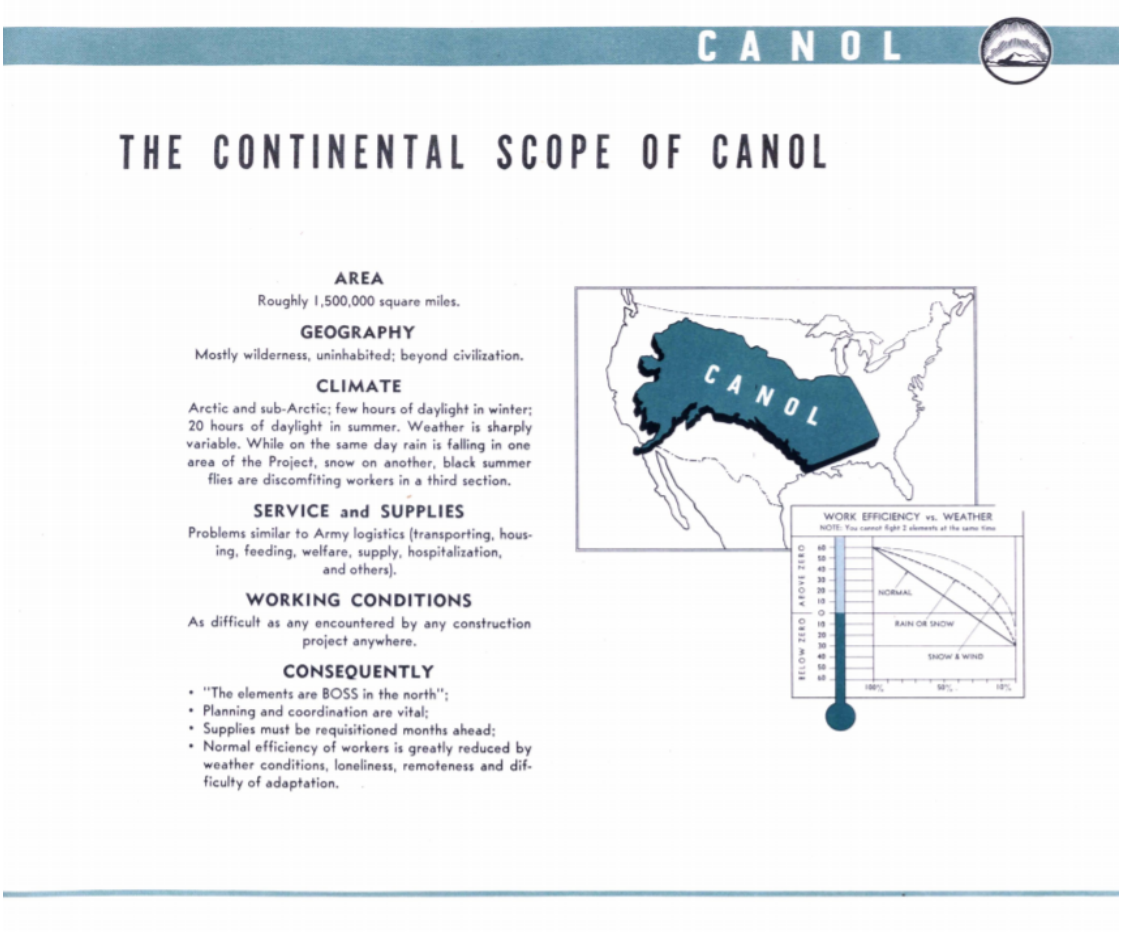


Figure 5. From the Canol project report, 1, May-December 1942 / War Department, Corps of Engineers [and] Bechtel Price-Callahan.

It took overall twenty months to build the Canol pipeline, in a massive endeavour that involved thousands of people in the construction, including several Natives such as Dene Fred Andrew and Edward and George Blondin, who guided surveyors from Norman Wells through the Mackenzie Mountains (Hoyle, 2007, pp. 167-187). However, despite the magnitude of the project, the construction company did not take into proper consideration either the conditions of the ground or the harshness of the weather, thus resulting into crude oil often spilling along the length of the pipeline. For this reason, eleven months after the oil first arrived in Whitehorse, the U.S. Army issued an order to stop the production, a decision which led to the dismantlement of the pipeline. Eventually, the Canol Project was a short-lived venture, which left huge debts and environmental damages behind. In spite of this, the pipeline remains an enduring expression of the narrative of crisis (or heroic petro-narrative) born during the years of the Second World War

and which, as hinted by scholar Timothy Mitchell(2011), has, in more recent times, been used to justify armed interventions in the Middle East.

Furthermore, far from representing an isolated endeavour, the Canol project triggered further hydrocarbon explorations. During drilling operations in Norman Wells, Imperial's geologists found out that the structure of the area was mostly so-called Devonian reef - the richest reservoir of oil and natural gas. On the basis of this information, geologist Ted Link started to look for other Devonian reefs, eventually locating them in Alberta, and specifically, in a hamlet south of Edmonton: Leduc (Gow, 2005; McKenzie-Brown, 2010). The Leduc #1 oil discovery in February 1947 was a pivotal event in Canadian oil and gas history, which not only kick-started Alberta's extractive industry, but paved the way towards an intensive development of Canadian oil and gas resources.

3.4. The oil era and the Canada of the North (1950s-2000s)

By the early 1950s, crude oil had replaced coal as Canada's central source of energy, and Canadians, from West to East, had soon found themselves ready to embrace the products and services brought by the oil age. At the same time, in spite of the enthusiasm generated by the Leduc #01, the political attention was about to be directed, once again, further North. The Canol project, regardless of how short-sighted, had shown the potential of northern development; a goal which could not be fully pursued without a clear assertion of sovereignty over the Canadian Arctic[38]. Suddenly, for the first time since the discovery of oil in Norman Wells, the North was to acquire a position of prominence in the Canadian agenda. One of the major results of this new turn was the launch, in 1957, by Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker of a large infrastructure project under the emblematic name 'Roads to Resources'(Abele, 1987; Newman, 1973). The program was intended to build a transportation network that could ease the way for Canadian investors to access and exploit the vast resources available, in particular, within its Northern territories. Now that the war was only a far memory, Canada's petro-history was ready to host a new chapter, characterized by growing infrastructural investments in the Northern region, whose main beneficiary was meant to be, more than ever, the fossil fuel industry.

In a speech held in 1958 in Winnipeg, eight months after he had taken office, Diefenbaker openly voiced his Northern ambitions: 'This is the vision: One Canada. One

[38] Especially in light of the increasing American influence in the area.

Canada, where Canadians will have preserved to them the control of their own economic and political destiny. Sir John A. Macdonald saw a Canada from east to west: he opened the west. I see a new Canada—a Canada of the North!' (as quoted in Smith, 1995, p. 280). To claim and gain control over Canada's natural resources became thus a national priority, which Diefenbaker supported and incorporated into his visionary project. The country was at a crossroad.

> We have a choice - a road to greatness in faith and dedication - or the road to nonfulfilment of Canada's destiny (John Diefebaker quoted in Newman, 1973, p. 52).

I suggest that Diefenbaker's words constituted the prelude of a new petro-narrative, deeply embedded within a wider nationalist (or, as I will argue later, "petro-nationalist") project, which will take multiple and sometimes ambivalent discursive connotations in the years to come. In 1959, the Canadian National Energy Board, an independent federal regulatory agency was established with the mandate 'to monitor and report on all federal matters of energy as well as regulate pipelines, energy imports and exports and utility rates and tariffs'. At the same time, together with oil, another resource had begun to attract the interest of many, and to slowly make its way into Canada's extractive sector, namely natural gas. In 1963, exploratory drillings began in the Mackenzie Delta, leading to the discovery of large reserves of natural gas in the mid-1970s. Looking at the end of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, one can say that this period marks the beginning of a whole new phase in Northern Canadian and, more generally, in Arctic history of resource extraction, characterized, on the one hand, by extensive hydrocarbon exploitation (see for example the oil discoveries at Alaska's Prudhoe Bay, in the Beaufort Sea and along the Mackenzie Valley), and, on the other one, by arising feelings of restlessness and discontent shared by different indigenous peoples. Historians often tend to disagree on the choice of turning points, i.e. of those particular events, which have changed the (assumedly linear) progression of history in completely unexpected and radical ways. If we look at the global petro-history, there is an event which stands out for its significance and for its ability to influence and, even dramatically, change political, social and economic balances: the 1973 oil crisis.

In the early 1970s, in response to American support of Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) established an oil embargo against

Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. By the end of the decade, the price of oil was almost $40 a barrel, compared to previous $3 a barrel. Eric Hobsbawm, in his Age of the Extremes (1995, p. 403) writes, 'The history of the twenty years after 1973 is that of a world which has lost its bearings and slid into instability and crisis'. Hobsbawm's considerations have been criticized for being overly biased by his western-centric perspective (Garavini, 2011), and especially for failing to recognize that perhaps 1973 was not necessarily the beginning of a crisis, but more consistently, the beginning of a change.

Shifting the focus back to Canada, increased oil and gas prices did hit Canadians hard, while, at the same time, one province, Alberta, experienced a huge economic boom, as its oil industry flourished and created more jobs than ever before. For this reason, I tend to be more cautious when it comes to assessing 1973 as a year of crisis, and rather, to address it as a year of transformation (Ferguson, 2010), which in Canada (but the same can be said of the United States and of other Western oil producing countries) marked the development and concrete manifestation of a new petro-narrative, namely a *nationalist petro-narrative*, bound to persist and evolve also in the years to follow. In this regard, from 1973, Canadian government started an interventionist policy (Donaghy and Carroll, 2011), breaking the balance between domestic and international oil and gas prices, in order to safeguard Canadian consumers against the whims of global oil markets. The most significant steps within this manoeuvre were 1) the establishment in 1975 of Petrocanada, a Crown Corporation of Canada and national oil company, and 2) the introduction in 1980, during Pierre Trudeau's premiership of the National Energy Program (NEP). The NEP was an energy policy aimed, as stated in the federal budget (Department of Finance, 1980, p.6), at guaranteeing:

> Security of supply and ultimate independence from the world oil market; opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the energy industry, particularly oil and gas, and to share in the benefits of its expansion; and fairness, with a pricing and revenue-sharing regime which recognizes the needs and rights of all Canadians.

Trudeau's Liberal government became thus famous, among the other things, for its efforts towards nationalising a still largely foreign- (and especially, American) controlled oil industry. The way he attempted to do so was by constructing a nationalist narrative, which consistently

promoted self-sufficiency and encouraged Canadian investments, in opposition to market- and export-oriented policies. However, time was not in Trudeau's favour. Just few months after the launch of the NEP, Canada, as many other Western countries, entered recession. The NEP became thus highly unpopular, especially in the most important oil-producing province, Alberta, where residents saw the energy program as a federal intrusion and as a threat to their now consolidated petro-business. Due to the large discontent, in 1985, under the new Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, the Western Accord was signed, which deregulated oil prices, abolished import subsidies and taxes on crude oil products, and substantially lifted the controls over oil exports. The same year, Interprovincial Pipelines completed a new 866 km (538 mi.) line between Norman Wells in the NWT and Zama in extreme north-western Alberta, to allow for easier transport of oil towards southern markets. In spite of the hard hit to the oil and gas industry, Norman Wells would become the third most productive field in Canada and Imperial Oil's largest reserve of crude oil.

3.5. Canada as a Global Energy Superpower: the Harper era (2006-2015)

At the beginning of his conservative government and on the eve of his debut at the St. Petersburg 2006 G8 Summit, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered a speech to the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, where he emphatically stated:

> One of the primary targets for British investors has been our booming energy sector. They have recognized Canada's emergence as a global energy powerhouse - the emerging "energy superpower" our government intends to build.

In the same speech (2006a), he also brought some statistics concerning Canada's energy production:

> We are currently the fifth largest energy producer in the world.
> We rank 3rd and 7th in global gas and oil production respectively.
> We generate more hydro-electric power than any other country on earth.
> And we are the world's largest supplier of uranium.
> But that's just the beginning.

In spite of supporting a very different economic agenda, namely one prioritizing de-regulation and market-oriented decisions over stronger federal intervention and domestic energy sufficiency, Harper's rhetoric does share a lot with the nationalist petro-narrative of Pierre Trudeau. In this sense, looking at the previously quoted 1980's budget, it is even possible to find few significant lines that highly resemble and seem to anticipate what Harper would then state in his 2006's talk, such as the following: 'in our energy resources, our other natural resources, our developed industrial structures and our people, we are a nation with opportunities second to no other nation' (p.6). If Trudeau's declared goal was to 'Canadianize' the energy industry in order to break Canada's dependency on foreign investments and to support Canadian oil and gas producers and prices, eventually, Harper's propaganda did not seem to differ too much, showing similar *claiming* efforts as Trudeau's one. There is in fact an element that bonds Stephen Harper's and Pierre Trudeau's energy policies and consequently, their respective petro-narratives: the claim that Canada needs to affirm and actively perform its status of oil and gas producer (either in the global or in the domestic arena), and that resource extraction undoubtedly constitutes the core of the country's economy. This claim is a recurring theme in the nationalist petro-narratives, (re)produced by both Trudeau and Harper through their energy agendas. However, there is indeed a fundamental difference, which can be identified in the two opposite economic policies - protectionism in the case of Trudeau and free trade in the case of Harper - promoted by the two prime ministers. This difference, I suggest here, has given rise to two opposite connotations given by Trudeau and Harper to the same nationalist petro-narrative: on the one side, a predominantly *domestic* one (Trudeau) underlining Canada's position of strength in global oil economy in order to prompt a disengagement from the latter in favour of self-sufficiency; and, on the other side, a *global* one (Harper), based on the same acknowledgement of Canada's central role in the global oil production, but, differently from Trudeau's, ultimately finalized at promoting further foreign investments in the country, in the hope of consolidating Canada's position of power.

Although the pairing of the term "global" with the term "nationalist" might seem contradictory and perhaps lead to confusion, I consider it instead quite effective to illustrate the contraposition (and possible ambiguity) between Harper's use of nationalism and nationalistic arguments in his political propaganda in combination with a predominantly market-oriented economic agenda consistently presenting Canada as a 'stable, reliable producer' (2006) to

foreign business partners (United States and China in particular). In this regard, in light of my previous considerations on the frequent overlap of the petro-narratives, another interesting element in Harper's nationalist petro-narrative is its "heroic" connotation, which recalls the *petro-narrative of crisis* discussed in Section 3.3.

> And an *ocean of oil-soaked sand* lies under the muskeg of northern Alberta - my home province.
> The oil sands are the *second largest oil deposit in the world*, bigger than Iraq, Iran or Russia; exceeded only by Saudi Arabia.
> Digging the bitumen out of the ground, squeezing out the oil and converting it in into synthetic crude is a *monumental challenge.*
> It requires *vast* amounts of capital, *Brobdingnagian* technology, and *an army* of skilled workers.
> In short, it is an *enterprise of epic proportions*, akin to the building of the pyramids or China's Great Wall.
> Only *bigger.* (Harper, 2006a, my italics).

Looking at this extract from the 2006 speech, it is interesting to notice how the rhetoric of heroism, rather than being employed to glorify the extractive enterprise as an act of bravery during exceptional times, is in this case used to legitimize Canada's future of energy superpower (Hester, 2007; Way, 2011); a future envisioned as a manifest destiny to fulfil, a path already laid, and yet, no less arduous and challenging to undertake. In this sense, Harper's nationalist petro-narrative has been making a large use of the rhetorical elements typical of the petro-narrative of crisis, in order to imbue resource development with a sense of greatness and pride, and, by doing so, to further validate it in front of the broader public. However, far from constituting a mere rhetoric exercise, Harper's nationalist petro-narrative has produced very concrete effects, made evident in a policy advocating a substantial increase of natural resource extraction and exploitation throughout the country. In this sense, despite the opposition of environmentalists and many aboriginal people, Stephen Harper has, over the nine years of his government, battled relentlessly for the approval of several pipeline projects, including the Keystone XL Pipeline, a TransCanada Corp.'s pipeline meant to move 800,000 barrels a day of oil sands bitumen from Alberta to the U.S. Gulf Coast, and the Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline, a network of infrastructures meant to transport 525,000 barrels of oil sands-derived crude per day from Alberta to a Pacific port at Kitimat, British Columbia, and thought mainly to supply the Chinese

market. Between 2012 and 2013, the mining sector contributed to 3.4% of Canada's GDP (Mining Association of Canada, 2013), while the oil and gas sector to approximately 6% (Leach, 2013). If these numbers already contain the evidences of the prominent role of natural resource extraction in Canadian economy during the Harper government, the Budget Plan released in 2014 can be seen as motivated by a wish to consolidate such position. During the presentation of the budget, former finance minister Jim Flaherty (2014) stated in fact that 'making sure that Canadian energy remains available to markets around the world is a priority for this government' (quoted in Kilkpatrick, 2014). According to several authors (Bolin and Ståhlberg, 2010; Fan, 2010; Jordan, 2014; Van Ham, 2001) *branding* can be regarded as a fundamental strategy - or even form - of nationalism, which is increasingly put into practice, mostly by governments, in order to craft specific images of the nation. In Flaherty's words, and particularly in his reference to what he terms 'Canadian energy', I have traced the same attempt to attach a (national) brand to something - energy- otherwise inherently relational, being produced, distributed and consumed at multiple and intersecting scales.

In spite of the efforts of Harper administration, the path towards Canada's future as an energy superpower proved to be harder than expected. Besides the limitations posed by the fluctuation in the world oil prices, throughout his mandates, Harper often had to face the violent public opposition raised by the choice of placing oil sands development at the centre of his economic agenda. In this sense, it is worth to notice that, while introducing sweeping changes to Canadian environmental regulation, such as the vote for the withdrawal of Canada from the Kyoto Agreement (2011), Harper's cabinet also claimed to want to address the environmental concerns associated with natural resource extraction. The most important initiative in this regard was the launch, in 2012, of the Responsible Resource Development Plan, established 'to create good, skilled, well-paying jobs in cities and communities across Canada, while maintaining the highest possible standards for protecting the environment' (Government of Canada, 2012).
With regards to the Plan, former Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver declared, during an interview in November of the same year, that the priority for the government was 'to protect Canadians and to protect the environment (…) we care about these issues - and we're with them when they express their love for the natural beauty of this fantastic country' (quoted in Vanderklippe, 2012). This openly contradictory aspect of Harper's energy policy can be seen as

an integral element of his *(global) nationalist petro-narrative*, a deeply elusive narrative constantly shifting between, on the one hand, the promotion of resource extraction as a national interest and, on the other one, the construction of an environmentally-friendly image of the government as mere performance, in order to gain wider consensus, especially in a global context of increasing environmental attention.

Figure 6. Frame from one of the Responsible Resource Development ads. Source: Canada's Economic Action Plan Website (2013).

The simultaneous use of a *green* and *extractive* propaganda made by the Harper government has been utterly criticized by environmental groups. Among them, it is worth to mention Greenpeace, which, in 2013, ran a campaign[39] aimed at unveiling the "greenwashing" of the tar sands, i.e. a communication strategy ran by the federal government mostly through its Responsible Resource Development's ads (Figure 6). According to Greenpeace, in fact, the government's advertising experiment was indeed meant to offer a more positive and less threatening image of the tar sands industry, while simultaneously hiding the catastrophic environmental consequences of this business. If the ambiguous coexistence of increasing investments in the oil sector and environmental propaganda can be considered, as it has been suggested so far, a peculiar trait of Harper's nationalist petro-narrative, the following section is going to hint that this might have been the early manifestation of a similarly elusive petro-

[39] A video of the Greenpeace campaign is contained in the article 'Let's laugh Harper's tar sands off the air' (2013), Full reference in the reference list.

narrative, namely what I have termed a *petro-narrative of care and development*.

3.6. Justin Trudeau (2015-present): shaping a petro-narrative of care and development

After almost ten years of Conservative Party rule, in November 2015, Canada elected a Liberal government headed by Justin Trudeau. With a heavy legacy of environmental deregulation, climate change scepticism and expanding fossil fuel extraction, Trudeau represented, in the eyes of many Canadians, the new turn they had been anxiously waiting for.

Throughout the months preceding and immediately following his election, Trudeau has been repeatedly trying to give an image of himself and of his government in opposition with the one constructed by his predecessor Stephen Harper, especially with regard to his environmental policy. In this sense, while Harper was, during his mandate, often accused of ignoring or even undermining environmental issues, only to then promptly advertise the government's green efforts to regain the lost popularity, Trudeau presented himself from the very beginning as a proud advocate of Canada's transition to low-carbon economy. As a first important step in this direction, in April 2016, Canada joined other 175 countries in signing the Paris Agreement, a non-binding document that set out a global action plan to tackle climate change by limiting global warming below 2°C. The accord committed Canada to a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases from 2005 levels by 2030, the same goal proposed by former Conservative government. However, shortly after the Paris agreement, Trudeau also expressed his support to the Energy East project (a pipeline transporting 1.1 million barrels of bitumen a day from Alberta and Saskatchewan to Quebec and New Brunswick, which will be eventually shipped to overseas trade partners) and to the Keystone XL pipeline. Furthermore, few months later, in November, Trudeau cabinet approved two major pipeline projects, the Kinder Morgan's Trans-Mountain pipeline extension and Enbridge's Line 3, while rejecting highly criticized Northern Gateway pipeline. If Trudeau's decisions came to many as a surprise, especially in consideration of his previous environmental commitments, many others - including myself - were more cautious. The reason why Trudeau's choices should not be considered as some kind of betrayal or as a disavowal of past beliefs can indeed be found in his climate rhetoric, which, as I suggest, is very much relatable to Harper's ambiguous petro-narrative. Although it is beyond doubt that Trudeau's environmental efforts have already been far more advanced and promising than those

of his predecessor, there is a fundamental element, which characterized Harper's *global-nationalist* petro-narrative and which, as it seems, finds in Trudeau its most fierce defender: the assumption that the approval of new pipeline projects and environmental protection can perfectly coexist. The ambivalent narrative resulting from this belief is what I have called a *petro-narrative of care and development;* a narrative which, under many aspects, has already manifested itself during the Harper's era, and which is (potentially) destined to be normalized and fully practiced during the current federal government. The petro-narrative of care and development is a deeply hybrid and ambivalent narrative in the sense that, while recognizing the longstanding importance of resource extraction for Canada's economy, proposes a "polished" image of the latter, by advertising a sustainable and responsible approach to it. As previously noticed, the visible contradiction resulting from the association of oil and gas development, on the one hand, and environmentalism, on the other one, is opposed and confuted, by means of a rhetoric which emphasizes: 1) the multiple benefits offered by having both resource extraction and the environment as simultaneous priorities; 2) the fact that the majority of Canadian population has been indeed treasuring and actively practising this balance for long time. In this regard, in announcing his approval of the two pipelines, Trudeau (2016) stressed how 'voters rejected the old thinking that what is good for the economy is bad for the environment. They embraced the idea that we need strong environmental policies if we expect to develop our natural resources and get them to international markets'.

Looking at the goals set within Trudeau's energy policy, it is thus interesting to notice how, while banning Arctic offshore drilling (2016) and proposing a Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change[40], Trudeau's government continues to present the building of new extractive facilities (e.g. pipelines) as inevitable, motivating it with the need to secure a strong economy for the carbon transition. In this regard, at the opening ceremony of the Globe 2016 Leadership Summit in Vancouver, Trudeau (2016) reiterated that:

> To get there [*to meet the climate goals*], we need to make smart strategic investments in clean growth and new infrastructure, but we must also continue to generate wealth from our abundant natural resources to fund this transition to a low-carbon economy (…) It's what Canadians expect

[40] The framework sets, among the other things, a national price on carbon and working to develop cleaner standards for fuel.

of their government and industries, and that's what we're going to be working very hard to deliver.

3.7. Conclusions: an unfinished petro(hi)story

Canadian history of oil and gas exploration and development is one where new actors, new arenas and new dilemmas are constantly brought in. In this condensed and in no way comprehensive review, I have attempted to explore this history through the multiple narratives shaped by government and industry in order to make sense of, justify and promote resource extraction across Canada. What this genealogy has helped me to illustrate is the progressive transformation of such narratives into expressions of a deeply nationalist project, which, as I am going to argue in the following chapter, has attempted to make oil and gas development - and the contested geographies created by the latter - a fundamental element of national identification.

Interestingly, while all the petro-narratives mentioned here have a distinguishable promissory feature, over the last years, the promise embodied by extractive activities has shifted from being one of jobs, sovereignty or economic dominance to one of a greener, more sustainable and, quite ironically, fossil-free future. In this sense, Justin Trudeau's petro-narrative is perhaps something new, which, while still emphasizing the importance of resource extraction as a 'national interest', also speaks to a collectivity far more diverse and potentially broader than the nation, and including other relevant subjects such as minorities, indigenous peoples, NGOs and, especially, the international community.

As many will have noticed, I have willingly left out of this historical genealogy potential concurrent narratives, primarily indigenous ones, which, as voices silenced for long time, might have indeed contributed to a very different process of nation-building. Nevertheless, these voices and their history will be later addressed in the second part of this thesis (Chapter 5-7).

Chapter 4. Petro-nation-building. Mapping the 'energy frontier'.

Introduction: Building a Petronation

As it has emerged from the previous chapter, Canada's history is tightly entangled with the process of natural resource exploitation, which has predominantly, although not solely, been carried out by means of hydrocarbon (e.g. coal, oil, gas) exploration and extraction. In the chapter, I have shown how different, yet often overlapping narratives have been used not only to justify, but to concretely encourage oil and gas development throughout the country. In this sense, through the amplification of a single extractive enterprise into a collective endeavour, the search for oil across the Mackenzie Delta, the building of a pipeline or the drilling of a well have all been discursively configured as metaphors of a higher and often quite abstract 'national interest'.

Starting from these premises, in this chapter, I am going to further illustrate how, far from being relevant uniquely as an economic activity, hydrocarbon extraction in Canada has been at the centre of an elusive, yet powerful nationalist strategy. This strategy, through its emphasis on the unifying aspects of extractive technologies and on the opportunities provided by resource exploitation, has been used to create and maintain a national collectivity characterized by an absolute reliance on fossil fuels. Melissa Aronczyk (2017, p. 79) observes that 'to promote a narrative of progress, destiny, innovation, and efficiency, and to use this narrative to promote national attachment, is a cunning strategy'. Drawing upon these considerations, I use here the term 'petro-nation-building'[41] to refer to a political process undertaken by the state - more specifically, by governmental structures in collaboration with industrial elites - and aimed at the creation of a (supposedly) homogeneous community of people sharing a sense of belonging to a

[41] The term 'petro-nation' is used by Peter Rutland in his article *Petronation? Oil, gas and national identity in Russia* (2015). While differently from Rutland, I am not interested in investigating and evaluating people's sense of belonging towards oil and gas, I definitely share with the author an interest towards exploring how oil and gas become part of national narratives. Furthermore, similar to Rutland's conclusions, my observations do not necessarily point at the fact that Canada *is* a 'petro-nation', and rather, emphasize the "unfinishedness" of petro-nation-building as a political-discursive process.

common history of resource extraction, and of close identification with oil and gas development, where the latter deeply affects collective beliefs, values and expectations.

It is worth to mention that much of the inspiration for the theories and the empirical data presented in this chapter stems from an intense period of research (Winter-Spring 2017) spent in close contact with the scholars who are part of the Petrocultures Research Cluster at the University of Alberta (Edmonton, CA). In line with the research interests pursued by many of those working within the sub-fields of *energy humanities* and *energy geographies*, I am interested in exploring Canadian petro-nation-building by unraveling the deep relationship linking nationalism, space and technology. In order to do so, the chapter combines theoretical insights from studies of nationalism, technology and resource frontiers (Anderson, 2006; Charland, 1986; Shields, 2013) in its first part (4.1 to 4.3), together with an empirical focus on thematic/resource maps of the North in its second part (4.4 to 4.8).

4.1. Nation as construction

My understanding of nation and nationalism draws upon so-called constructivist/modernist approach, which has been pioneered by authors such as Benedict Anderson (2006), Ernest Gellner (2008), Eric Hosbawm (2012) and Thongchai Winichakul (1994). According to one such view, which can be placed in opposition to 'primordialist' perspectives on nationhood (Connor, 1990; Fichte, 2008; Shils, 1957; Van den Berghe, 1978), nations are not pre-existing, objective and given entities resulting from specific racial, ethnic or mythical bonds (as primordialists argue), but are instead "constructs", i.e. fabricated, contingent and depending on acts of recognition put into practice by the nation's own members. Among most prominent constructivist authors, Benedict Anderson is often considered the main representative of this school of thinking. Anderson (2006, pp. 5-7) defines the nation an 'imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'. What Anderson emphasizes in this definition is that while the members of this community will probably never know each other in real life, the imagination of some higher affinity among them will be enough to bring them together and make them feel connected.

Although sharing the main understanding of nation as construct, differently from Anderson, Ernest Gellner (2008) underlines that nationalism pre-exists the nation and not the

other way around. Even more importantly, in spite of maintaining a solid criticism towards natural/primordial origins of the nation, he argues that nationalism is a necessary and inevitable process, which accompanies the transformation of agrarian societies into industrial ones, and guarantees the creation of 'a homogenous industrial community' (p. 45).

While not providing a specific definition of nations, historian Eric Hobsbawm agrees with Benedict Anderson that nations are fundamentally modern creations. However, from a distinctly Marxist perspective, he insists that nations are also the product of elites and governments, which make use of so-called 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012, p. 1) - i.e. symbolic artefacts and practices that recall timeless roots and shape a fictitious continuity with the past through repetition - in order to maintain stability and exercise an emotional control over the masses.

While the constructivist approach to nationalism should in no way be seen as a uniform attempt to define and understand this phenomenon, it is interesting to notice how many of the scholars privileging this perspective have made observations on the role of technology in shaping a more or less cohesive national consciousness. In this sense, one of the main points of Benedict Anderson's theory of nationalism is that the development of printing press - or, as he calls it, "print capitalism" (2006, p.45) - enabled communities to relate with each other and to identify themselves as part of a larger group. In the same fashion, Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul (1994) examines the influence of modern mapping techniques on the emergence of the Thai nation. According to Winichakul, maps have discursively constructed what he names the 'geo-body' of the nation, and have thus deeply affected the emergence of Thai national consciousness. By drawing borders and frontiers where none existed before, the state has thus been not only affirming its existence, but creating a national space of belonging and distinctiveness.

The deep entanglement between technology and nation-building is particularly well illustrated by Canadian communication theorist Maurice Charland through his concept of *technological nationalism* which I am going to discuss in the next section.

4.2. Maurice Charland's technological nationalism

In the studies of scholars such as Karl Deutsch (1966), Benedict Anderson (2006), Thongchai Winichakul (1994), Maurice Charland (1986) and, more recently, Sulfikar Amir (2007) and Marco Adria (2010), technology is regarded as a fundamental element in the creation and maintenance of the nation. In particular, Maurice Charland has formulated the concept of *technological nationalism* to indicate the strict interplay between technology and its rhetorical use for nation-building purposes. Through the example of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Charland suggests in fact that the development of this massive infrastructure project between late 19th century and early 20th century was at the core of a specific nationalist strategy. This strategy was aimed at shaping a 'technologically mediated Canadian nation' (p. 202), by instilling a sense of belonging and unity in connection with a specific technological endeavour. Rhetorically presented as more than a unique economic landmark, the railway 'offered the possibility of developing a mythic rhetoric of national origin' (p. 200), and has thus, ever since its building, been progressively understood and represented as itself constitutive of the Canadian nation. In order to better explain the complex process through which technological nationalism operates, Charland identifies two main components of the latter: 1) a *material* (or physical) one, namely the concrete building of the infrastructure; and 2) a *discursive* one, centred on the 'development of a rhetoric which ideologically constituted those in Canada as Canadians, united in the national project and under the political authority of a national government' (p. 202). Although the two aspects are strictly interrelated with and dependent on each other, it is especially the rhetorical element that, according to Charland, has proven to be absolutely necessary for the development of a national consciousness aligned with the political and economic interests of the state.

I believe that the concept of technological nationalism can potentially provide a very interesting lens through which to look at the process of Canadian petro-nation-building. For this reason, I will attempt to investigate the latter through four different, yet interconnected aspects, directly inspired by Charland's theorization: namely, 1) the discursive formation of the petro-nation; 2) the role of technology in this process; 3) the rhetoric of national purpose and 4) the rhetoric of national space.

1) The discursive formation of the petro-nation

The main point of Charland's argument is that the material building of the railway alone could have never been enough to develop a national consciousness based on the identification of all Canadians with a single technological enterprise. This goal was made possible to achieve by shaping an adequately compelling rhetoric, able to legitimize and glorify the construction project as an opportunity of nation-building. In the previous chapter, I have attempted to show how Canadian history of oil and gas can indeed be read through a series of narratives, which have been used to make sense of and justify extractive endeavours through different periods of time. What I have termed *petro-narratives*, although first emerging in contexts during which it is not yet possible to talk about 'nation' and processes of nation formation[42], are nevertheless progressively taking the shape of national narratives, namely of stories seeking to redefine collective identities, memories and futures on the basis of some specific beliefs, practices and images. Much of the data presented in the previous chapter shows how there has been a systematic use of various discursive strategies to legitimize a specific industrial path under the cover of a "higher" national interest.

To explore the complex dynamics of Canadian petro-nation-building entails then to acknowledge the unavoidable reciprocity between the materiality and the discursivity of oil and gas development; in other words, to acknowledge that the latter, in order to shift from mere industrial plan to part of a broader nation-building strategy, has had to rely on the continuous production of unifying narratives. After all, as explained by Charland (p. 200) himself:

> Rhetoric is necessary both as a *legitimation* of a sovereign united Canada within the discursive field of parliamentary government, and as an *inducement* for those in Canada to see themselves as Canadian; for Canada to be legitimated, a myth is necessary.

2) The role of technology in petro-nation building

While Charland does not give a specific definition of technology and more often than not associates this term with concrete examples of technological achievements (e.g. the telegraph, the railway, the radio or the television), I embrace here a different and potentially, more comprehensive understanding of this term. Specifically, by considering not only its physical dimension, I wish to address 'technology' somehow as Michel Foucault (1977) understands this

[42] As in the case of the *petro-narrative of exploration* or the *scientific petro-narrative* (Chapter 3).

term, i.e. as more broadly encompassing various methods and procedures of governance (Behrent, 2013). In this perspective, technology can also be 'invisible', but nevertheless extremely concrete and tangible in its effects. Therefore, in the same way as, according to Maurice Charland, the railway system has brought a specific image of the nation into existence, I suggest that a more diverse and somehow elusive complex of technologies, which includes not only extractive facilities such as pipelines and oil rigs, but also maps, policies, scientific reports and newspaper articles, etc. has indeed played a fundamental role in Canadian petro-nation-building.

In the book chapter *Who We Are and What We Do: Canada as a Pipeline Nation*, political theorist Darin Barney (2017) suggests that the construction of pipelines has been rhetorically presented as a nation-building opportunity, and as a powerful metaphor of commonality and interrelatedness - namely, what Barney refers to as 'who we are and what we do'. In this sense, being himself inspired by Charland's observations, Barney identifies the main source of legitimation of pipeline projects in a 'rhetoric of national purpose' (p.79). This rhetoric, by dwelling on collective feelings of belonging, has been used to justify hydrocarbon extraction as a national imperative and as a superior interest uniting the whole country from East to West and from North to South.

Throughout the next two sections I am going first to introduce some of the main elements of the rhetoric of national purpose according to Barney, and secondly, I am going to expand on his argument by identifying a broader and potentially more overarching rhetoric.

3) The rhetoric of national purpose

It is a rather significant predicament the one which has been - and possibly still is - faced by the plurality of actors, such as politicians, businessmen or geologists, who, at a certain point, have found themselves in the position of encouraging or directly pursuing hydrocarbon exploration and extraction. Yet, in the moment of explaining (and justifying) to the wider public *why* the building of a pipeline, the drilling of a new well or the extraction of bitumen from the tar sands are unavoidable necessities, this predicament has been sophisticatedly solved through the production of a unifying and reassuring rhetoric, which Darin Barney (2017) terms the 'the

rhetoric of national purpose'. According to Barney, the rhetoric of national purpose is declaredly cross-boundary. It makes an abundant use of supposedly inclusive adjectives (such as 'pan-Canadian'), while ultimately often neglecting differences and oppositions, and voicing the interests of a rather restricted group of people. By endowing resource extraction with both an instrumental (i.e. by stressing the necessity of developing Canadian economy and Canada's predominant role in the world oil and gas production) and an ideological (i.e. by emphasizing shared national beliefs and feelings of belonging) value, this rhetoric has managed to 'transform global economic interests into the collective ideal of the nation, harnessing industrial development to collective well-being' (Aronczyk, 2017, p.79).

Looking at the following quotes, which I have extracted from a selection of documents, might be, in this sense, particularly illuminating.

In the 1980's Federal Budget issued during the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau, an emblematic passage (p. 10) recites:

> **As a matter of national priority,** the government will ensure that the natural gas pipeline system is extended beyond Montreal to Quebec City and the Maritimes *[highlight not present in original text]*.

In a keynote speech delivered to the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2012, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper (quoted in Campion-Smith, 2012) stated:

> We will make it **a national priority** *[highlight not present in original text]* to ensure we have the capacity to export our energy products beyond the United States and specifically to Asia.

Finally, in the speech announcing the approval of the Trans Mountain and the Line 3 pipelines in November 2016, Justin Trudeau proudly asserted that:

> The decision we took today is the one that is **in the best interests of Canada [***highlight not present in original text*].

Although belonging to different periods of Canada's political and economic history, these passages somehow all hint at a precise intention of the Canadian federal government to frame 'collective investment in large-scale technological projects (…) as coinciding with the nation's interests' (Barney, 2017, p. 79). Following Barney's argument, it results that pipeline building is presented not only as metaphor of an abstract national interest, but, thanks to its legitimation through official discourses, as a self-evident, incontestable "truth", which needs to be fully pursued by means of development plans and tailored policies[43].

The constant edification of fossil fuel extraction as a national imperative is indeed a fundamental aspect to take in consideration when looking at the discursive production of the Canadian petro-nation. At the same time, however, although I find Barney's argument very convincing and provocative, I want to suggest here that there is one element, which can possibly be used to better grasp the complex dynamics of petro-nation-building: space. I argue here in fact that the reference to the 'national purpose' as a way to legitimize hydrocarbon development can be seen as part of a broader and potentially more powerful rhetoric, namely what I have termed here "the rhetoric of (petro)national space".

4) The rhetoric of a (petro)national space

> [The Canadian Pacific Railway] was an element of strategy, based in the belief that a nation could be built by binding space (Charland, 1986, p. 201).

The construction of nationhood has indeed a fundamental *spatial* dimension. Nations and nationalist strategies are often linked with territorial practices such as demarcating, naming and eventually claiming ownership over certain geographical areas (Sack, 1986). If the goal of nation-building is 'to integrate and harmonize socially, regionally or even politically and institutionally divided sections of people' (Alter, 1994, p. 14), then it makes sense to conceive this process as actively promoted through the imagination, reproduction and maintenance of

[43] In connection with Barney's observations, it is also worth to mention two articles, one from the Financial Post (Francis, 2010), titled *See pipeline as nation-building*, where the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline is regarded as 'another nation-building project with many added advantages'; and the second one from the Calgary Herald (Scholz, 2016) where pipelines are called 'the nation-building opportunity of our time'.

specific spatialities. One of these, *territory,* can indeed be seen as the most deeply embedded with nationalism (Herb and Kaplan, 1999; Penrose, 2002; White, 2000; Winichakul, 1994), which has continuously engaged with 'territory' and transformed it into the very constitutive element of the nation-state.

Paasi (2000, p. 4), who defines nationalism as 'a specific, strategic form of territoriality and an expression of the struggle for control over land and socio-spatial consciousness', points out that national identities should be seen as profoundly and diversely spatialized by means of specific institutions and discourses. I suggest here that Canadian petro-nation-building can indeed be better understood by emphasizing the fundamental *spatial* dimension of technological nationalism; in other words, by focusing on the rhetorical construction of space, and on the 'flexible mobilization of the emotional and material powers of territory' (Penrose, 2002, p. 294) by means of technology. According to Barney (2017), framing pipelines as a source of collective well-being and as a national purpose to pursue constitutes the main discursive strategy of technological nationalism in Canada. I argue, instead, that it is the constant and still unfinished (discursive and material) production of a national (petro)space - of which the mobilization of a national purpose is only *one* expression - to have had the most powerful and long-lasting effects on Canadian nationhood. In fact, by rhetorically envisioning and territorially configuring a national space of pride, opportunity and extractivism, Canadian government and industry have also attempted to create a community of people increasingly sure of the shared value of hydrocarbon development (Barney's rhetoric of national purpose), and thus actively participating in its pursuit. To better explain my argument, I am going to direct my attention towards two interrelated spatial aspects of petro-nation-building, namely *frontier formation* and the *role of technology* in fostering the latter.

Territoriality often implies some form of frontier- or boundary-making, which combines different people and resources together, while separating and excluding other. Charland's technological nationalism endows technology with the ability to bind space, but perhaps misses to emphasize that technology has indeed a unifying as much as a dividing potential, and that space-binding is inevitably carried out by detaching non-belonging 'Others'.

When it comes to Canadian petro-nation-building, different technologies, such as for instance maps or pipelines, have been used to assert control over space, by shaping frontiers and

corridors where none existed before, and by tracing the contours of a bordered, identifiable, and governable national space. Regardless of how controversial and disputed, pipelines have been rhetorically promoted as symbols of a shared and durable wealth, and have thus actively contributed to the configuration of an imaginary space of national unity. The purpose of this process is accurately described by Adria (2010, p. 34), according to whom, 'technology serves to fill the gap created by the problem of pluralism, by operating at the centre of a discourse of modernity, cultural homogeneity, and industrial progress'. Designed mostly to be invisible (Barry, 2009) and to be built far from the capitals, pipelines are meant to reach remote places, to stretch for thousands of miles, and to overcome - while, more often than not, creating - both physical and mental boundaries.

At the same time, as mentioned before, what can be included in the domain of 'technology', especially when we explore such a multifaceted and complex process as oil and gas development, should not necessarily be restricted to the materiality of extractive infrastructures. Before pipelines are concretely built, by simply narrating and envisioning a national space which is constantly modeled and demarcated according to different extractive plans, petro-nation-builders have managed to set a particular process of space-making into motion. The national space rhetorically forged and maintained through the technology of maps, scientific reports, political speeches and policy documents, is thus not a pre-existing one suddenly crossed by pipelines. Rather, it is a newly produced and constantly transforming technological space, where new boundaries are continuously delineated, lands and territories are strategically claimed under the banner of state sovereignty or indigenous self-determination, and where people move along energy corridors, which both divide them and bring them together in whole different ways. As such, the petro-national space is one undergoing continuous extension - an extension which, for many decades, has been pushed towards North.

In this sense, my central argument here is that in the spatial, discursive and political development of Canada as a petro-nation, the North of the country has played a fundamental role. While the importance of the North as a national myth is more widely recognized and discussed (Francis, 1997; Grace, 2002; Kannenberg, 2014; Shields, 2013), I would like to focus on the shaping of Canada's Northwest frontier and on its progressive transformation into what I call the 'energy

frontier' as a concrete expression of the territorial practices carried out within petro-nation-building. Frontiers as much as nations should not be taken as given, but as carefully and elusively fabricated by means of technology and its discursive power.

Through the insights provided by critical cartography (Harley, 1988a, Harley, 1989, Wood, 2010) and various studies of resource frontiers (Nuttall, 2010b; Rasmussen and Lund, 2017), in the second part of this chapter, I will examine a selection of maps of the North of Canada, which, as I conclude, help sustain and reproduce the 'energy frontier' imaginary (Billon and Carter, 2012; Nuttall, 2006). Ultimately, these maps emerge as much more than mere tools of spatial knowledge, and rather, as fundamental technologies of petro-nation-building.

4.3. Imagining the Canadian North as an energy frontier

Regardless of how physically or mentally far, the "North"[44] is deeply embedded in Canadian national imaginary, constituting an emblematic example of what Edward Said (1978) calls 'imagined geographies', i.e. perceived spaces that go beyond the physical boundaries and whose construction and representation can be framed within specific power relations.

For centuries, the North of Canada has been both represented as a remote, cold and hostile wilderness, where only few brave men would venture, and, at the same time, as an essential and integral part of Canada's national space, making it thus subject to being mapped, demarcated, named and controlled. Regarding this duality, Philip Steinberg (2010, p. 56) writes that '"the North" is imagined as a space of national pride, belonging and exploration: a space that is alternately normalized as a fundamental extension of state territory and exoticized as a distant wilderness to be conquered'. Although likely appearing so, these two images of the North - wilderness and state territory - are far from contradictory, and, rather, are similar expressions of state attempts towards asserting ownership through space-making. In the case of Northern Canada, such space has been represented and performed as a mythical site of endless opportunities, an imagination often associated with and reinforced by the celebration of its pristine and untamed environment hosting an array of hidden treasures. In the harsh and distant North, the struggle of the courageous (Southern) Canadian against the challenges of Northern nature has taken place; a struggle which, in spite of responding more often than not to private

[44] For a broader engagement with spatial definitions of "North" in the Canadian context see Introduction, 1.3. "Whose North? A plurality of spatial imaginaries".

interests, has been narrated and rhetorically framed within broader efforts towards building a united country. In this regard, Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi (2011, p. 2) notice that the Canadian North has become 'synonymous with the country as a whole, its people, and the values upon which the nation was built, a creation of a population forging a common destiny'. Through its multiple and compelling images, the North has thus been configured as a space to bind, to conquer and tame, for the sake of a 'higher' national unity.

In light of these considerations, I suggest that, within the process of Canadian nation-building, one specific spatial representation of the North has been used to exercise a profoundly mobilizing effect - namely, the *frontier*.

The frontier

The frontier is a line traced on a map, a story told by an explorer, a vision of the future. Frontiers are inherently elusive. They are neither clearly defined spaces nor places, but 'something that happens in and to space' (Rasmussen and Lund, 2017, p. 1) or, as beautifully phrased by Anna Tsing (2011, p. 32), 'an imaginative project capable of molding both places and processes'. Therefore, frontiers are much more than spatial constructs, and rather, political, economic, affective entities able to inform people's behaviors, practices and expectations. Originally formulated by American historian Frederick Jackson Turner (2008), the frontier-thesis claimed that the continual presence and development of the frontier imaginary had been playing a critical role in the creation of the United States' institutions and actively inspiring the country's efforts towards freedom and democracy. Understood as a thin line separating savagery from civilization, Turner's frontier was deeply infused with elements of masculinity, individualism and paternalism, the same characterizing the predominant narrative of the time, aimed at legitimating the 'democratisation' efforts of white American settlers (Cleary, 1993). While, according to Turner's perspective, frontiers are most likely coinciding with boundaries, they can also be approached as much more dynamic and multi-layered spatialities. In this sense, another classic frontier-theorist, Walter Prescott-Webb (1964), vividly emphasized that the frontier is 'lying within and not at the edge of the country. It is not a line to stop at, but an area inviting entrance' (p. 2). This definition engages with two fundamental elements of frontier spaces: their fluid and mobile location and their inherently 'expansive' nature. Regarding the first, frontiers

can indeed emerge at the edges as much as at the centre of the state, and might therefore be better conceived as 'interstitial spaces' (Isin, 2012), where different and contested identities, interests and practices encounter. In addition to that, Prescott-Webb's formulation points out a second fundamental aspect of the frontier imaginary, i.e. that in order to be configured as such, frontiers always need to be characterized by a certain degree of 'accessibility', regardless of how concretely difficult to reach, to cross and to tame. They are essentially sites of possibility, a characteristic that has not only resulted in the belief that rich opportunities would lie on the other side of the line, but that these could actually be seized with a more or less considerable amount of effort. And because, sooner or later, the frontier site will indeed be accessed and conquered, frontier-making activities are 'a-rhytmic and cyclical' (Rasmussen and Lund, 2017, p. 1), subject to transitory ambitions, and thus, to be constantly re-enacted somewhere else.

Not surprisingly, in this regard, frontiers are often *resource frontiers*, whose formation has been associated with violent practices of capitalist appropriation and settler colonialism (Barker, 2009; Barney, 2009; Bluwstein and Lund, 2016; Tsing, 2011), and regarded as a process deeply 'rooted in capital's drive to continuous expansion' (De Angelis, 2004, p. 72). Resource frontiers are unruly, savage and primitive. As Tsing (2011, p. 32) observes, the frontier is 'a space of desire: it calls; it appears to create its own demands; once glimpsed, one cannot but explore and exploit it'. Tsing's words are particularly revealing because they effectively unfold frontiers' inherent ambivalence. In fact, while frontiers can indeed be seen as fluid, dynamic and under continuous transformation, they can also be conceived as deeply embedded with immobility, separation and repetitiveness. Since frontier-making is indeed a non-linear activity, progressing through cycles of 'boom and bust' (Walker, 2006), and constantly depending on the imagination and representation of new frontier spaces, it can ultimately result very addictive. In other words, once frontier-thinking as a specific way of constructing and understanding space is adopted and cultivated, it proves to be quite challenging to abandon, with the consequence of 'trapping' people into fixed and authoritatively-imposed subject positions. While according to Rasmussen and Lund, 'frontiers can emerge and vanish' (2017, p. 3), I am more prone to say that they emerge and transform, by manifesting, together with their inner liveliness, a fundamental character of permanence. Borrowing Sara Ahmed's effective conceptualization (2010), I suggest then that frontiers can be considered "sticky spaces", sites of dynamism and transformation,

which are nevertheless bound to leave a permanent residue on those who come in contact with and within them.

In connection with the points above mentioned, while frontiers have been generally theorized as messy, de-regulated spaces, which confuse or neglect existing orders and laws (Rifkin, 2014), this might not always be the case. State attempts of turning frontiers into stable and governable spatialities suggest that frontiers are also territorial entities, which, therefore, embody notions of fixity and separation from a non-belonging Other. More often than not, frontiers have indeed coincided with borders, and have been understood as the thin line between wilderness and civilization or, in other words, between an 'Us' and a 'Them'. In this sense, with regard to spatial understandings of the North, Heininen (2007, p. 125) emphasizes that 'colonialism did not come alone but brought borders, meaning both borderlands, or frontiers, and boundaries, to the North. And borders are critical here because when defining a space, some are meant to be inside unlike others are meant to be drawn outside'.

In the works of several authors (Berger, 1977; Careless, 1954; Cross, 1970; Grace, 2002; Shields, 2013), the 'frontier' emerges as perhaps the most ubiquitous spatial imaginary to have concretely informed the relationship between Canada and its Northern regions. In this sense, anthropologist Mark Nuttall (2010a, p. 31), emphasizes that 'the frontier with all its spatial, temporal and transitional meanings continues to be fundamental to Canada's geographic imaginary irrespective of its contested nature'. At the same time, although the frontier imaginary holds undoubtedly a central importance in the construction of Canadian nationhood, what I want to suggest here is that, after the first oil and gas discoveries in Yukon and NWT in the early 1900s, this imaginary, while not disappearing, has been gradually appropriated by government and industry, and infused with a new extractive connotation.

The energy frontier

Over the last decades, several authors have investigated the emergence and negotiation of Arctic resource frontier(s) (Desbiens, 2004; Kristoffersen and Dale, 2014; Nuttall, 2010b; Steinberg, Tasch and Gerhardt, 2015; Stoddart and Smith, 2016). According to Rasmussen and Lund (2017, p. 4), 'a frontier emerges when a new resource is identified, defined and becomes subject to

extraction and commodification'. In this perspective, resource frontiers are understood as spaces which are not pre-existing, but 'brought about because new possibilities of resource extraction and use prompt new and competing claims to authority, legitimacy, and access' (ibid.).
From the drilling of oil in Norman Wells in 1920 and, even more consistently, from the discovery of large reserves of oil and natural gas in Prudhoe Bay in 1968, Canada's Northwest has been not only at the centre of increasing hydrocarbon exploration, but of a new form of frontier-making. I describe then the Northwest 'energy frontier' as a contested space of extraction, conflict and potentiality, which, although mostly informed by non-Northern perspectives and interventions, is eventually co-produced and maintained by a variety of actors. While not fully comprehensive, such definition is undoubtedly inspired by those studies investigating the discursive and material production of Northern *energyscapes* (Gismondi and Davidson, 2012; Lempinen, 2017; Mason, 2016; Steinberg and Kristoffersen, 2017, Wanvik, 2017, Warde, 2018), which are gaining increasing popularity across many scholarly environments.

While one might argue that 'hydrocarbon frontier' would have been a more adequate term to define the specific spatial imagination underlying Northern economic development throughout the last five decades, I believe that 'energy frontier' is ultimately a more comprehensive term for a variety of reasons.

First of all, as I have already mentioned in the Introduction to this work, I share the interests of those scholars who prefer to engage with 'energy' as a 'social relation', rather than strictly from an economic perspective (Calvert, 2016; Diamanti, 2016). Energy is inherently relational because, as explained by Kirby Calvert (2016, p. 110), 'different modes of energy production, distribution and use underpin material relations (i.e. landscape form and livelihood arrangements) as well as immaterial relations (i.e. perception and representation)'.

Secondly, since 'energy' often constitutes the final product of many processes of hydrocarbon extraction, it can be seen as inherently future-oriented. It results that the energy frontier is a space built on potentiality, where short-term goals are constantly and hectically pursued, and where the future is imaginatively evoked and anticipated. As emphasized by Anna Tsing (2011, pp. 28-29) in this regard, 'a frontier is an edge of space and time: a zone of not yet - not yet mapped, not yet regulated'.

Besides from epistemological considerations, my choice of the term 'energy frontier' stems also from an acknowledgement of the specificity of the Canadian context. In this sense, while 'energy' can indeed be produced from a variety of sources, in the case of Canada, energy production and consumption are largely dependent on fossil fuels[45] (i.e. mostly crude oil and natural gas). Therefore, in spite of the availability of renewables, Canadian energy development is still nowadays considered a prerogative of the petroleum industry. In direct connection with this point is the framing of energy production as a *nation-branding* strategy. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Canada has, over the decades, attempted to construct a national and international image not only of oil and gas producing country, but, as stated by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006a), of 'energy superpower'. It does not come as a surprise then that deeply controversial extractive plans (e.g. the building of pipelines through indigenous lands or, more recently, the development of the Athabascan tar sands) have often been legitimised as means towards the achievement of more long-term and overarching goals, such as energy sufficiency (at a domestic level) or a solid and reliable position in the global energy market (at an international level).

Map-making and frontier-making

Political geographer Michael Watts (1992) has pointed out how frontiers have a nation-building potential, in the sense that they are used not only to create emotional attachment to an imagined national space, but also to link specific economic aspirations to the pursuit of a manifested destiny. In line with my previous considerations on the role of 'space' in the construction of nationhood, the persistent imagination of the Northwest of the country as a frontier, and the progressive alignment of this imaginary with the extractive plans and ambitions of industry and government can indeed be seen as fundamental expressions of the process that I have termed 'petro-nation-building'.

The 'frontier' is indeed only one of the several ways to represent the Northwest of Canada (and more generally Northern/Arctic spaces). Yet, I argue here that the pervasive and long-lasting influence of this imaginary - both on ideas of nationhood and patterns of development - can be

[45] According to the statistics provided on the website of Natural Resources Canada (2018), Canada produced 29,331 petajoules of primary energy in 2016. The breakdown by fuel was: crude oil 31%, uranium 32%, natural gas 24%, hydro 5%, coal 5%, other renewables 3%, natural gas liquids 2%.

attributed, at least in part, to one of the main tools through which geographic knowledge has been produced and circulated, namely *maps*. Cartography has in fact not only visually supported the production of frontiers, but has concretely guaranteed their endurance, by sustaining shifting discourses of potentiality, urgency and development.

While still relatively few authors have investigated the role of maps in the making of Northern energy landscapes (Bennett, M. M. et al., 2016; Lempinen, 2017; Steinberg and Kristoffersen, 2017), I intend to do so by analysing representations of the Northwest 'energy frontier' in (mostly federally produced) thematic and resource maps. The aim of this analysis, which mostly combines insights from critical cartography, is to unravel how (apparently) diverse maps and mapping initiatives eventually project a similar array of energy spaces and futures.

4.4. Maps and (energy) dreams

> Maps are never value-free images (…) Both in the selectivity of their content and in their signs and styles of representation maps are a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world which is biased towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations (Harley, 1988a, p. 278).

In the last thirty years, critical cartography has increasingly directed its efforts towards exposing the hidden dynamics of map-making. In this context, maps have emerged as particularly 'eloquent' (Sauer, 1956, p. 289) devices, susceptible - just as other forms of communication - to being decoded, analyzed and interpreted. The result of this perspective, as illustrated through the works of its main representatives (Crampton, 2010; Harley, 1988b, 1989; Wood, 2010), is that maps have ceased to be considered passive reflections of the world or mere bureaucratic instruments, and, rather, have begun to be appreciated for their *productiv*e qualities. Maps in fact create, articulate and reproduce specific discourses, and are able to generate different and potentially contrasting affective responses (Navaro-Yashin, 2012). Far from being uniquely directed towards exerting control over a certain geographical area, maps' influence extends thus to shaping the behaviours, the expectations and the beliefs of the people inhabiting the latter.

First through their entanglement in colonial projects, and later through their progressive absorption into the techno-bureaucratic apparatus of the state, maps have been, and, in many aspects, continue to be important (although not the only) manifestations of state efforts to control space. Map-making has traditionally been used to both delineate new territories and to assert sovereignty rights over them; a characteristic which has made maps both a valued tool of governance, and, more often than not, of colonization. Before lands were concretely occupied or owned, they were claimed on maps, which served the purpose of visually legitimizing dispossession and imperialism. It is thus interesting to notice how, with modernity, maps have progressively become banners of scientific pursuit, sources of objectivity and accuracy, and eventually, beneficiaries of absolute reliance. By assumedly embodying a technical knowledge beyond the boundaries of bias and prejudice, maps have been trusted and honored as 'facts', instead of being recognized for their intrinsic selectivity and authoritarianism. As previously quoted critical cartographer John Brian Harley effectively points out, 'accuracy became a new talisman of authority' (1988a, p. 300).

While such considerations on the hidden mechanisms of cartography might lead to a form of 'cartographic anxiety' (Gregory, 1994; Krishna, 1994), that is to say, a growing disorientation generated by the complete distrust towards the information contained into maps, my purpose here is very different. What I would like to inspire in the reader is in fact a critical reflection upon maps, and, specifically looking at the Canadian context, upon the potential ambivalence of the energy geographies which thematic and resource maps contribute to creating.

Exploring the narrative power of maps: where space and time conjure

No one today would argue against the political nature of maps. However, this acknowledgement entails also to recognize the multiple and often overlapping interventions and agendas which inform map-making. If we adhere to Foucault's idea of power as exercised through social relations (1980), then maps, as an essential instrument of knowledge/power, can indeed be produced and employed by very different actors, including non-state ones such as indigenous peoples (Bryan, 2011; Bryan and Wood, 2015; Chapin et al., 2005; Engler N.J., Scassa T. and Taylor D.R.F. 2013; Scassa et al., 2015; Sparke, 1998).

The reason why maps so easily adapt to and attract a variety of users can be identified in a fundamental feature of these politically-charged devices, namely their unique 'narrative power' (Caquard and Cartwright, 2014). Maps tell stories: of discovery, of violence, of resistance, and hope. Sébastien Caquard and William Cartwright point out that cartography's narrative potential lies in its ability 'to represent the spatio-temporal structures of stories and their relations with places' (p.104). However, while the connection between maps and space emerges rather straightforwardly, the one between maps and time might definitely be less immediate.

I am interested in showing how maps of the Canadian North have not only been used to construct and represent *space*, but also to make a *time* of development, jobs or rights spatially concrete and thus even more possible and urgent to pursue. For this purpose, I am going to present selection of maps, which, as I suggest, have been used to produce (and reproduce) specific national imaginaries and development paths. All the maps included here have been selected throughout a period of intensive archival research conducted between February and April 2017 at the Cameron Library of the University of Alberta (Edmonton, CA), and at the Archives of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. Although I have come across hundreds of different maps during my research stay in Alberta, the ones I have chosen are those which, through their technical (and, apparently, most irrelevant) details, have encouraged me to question the choices and objectives behind their production and circulation. As it will be made evident, the time span of the selected maps is quite broad. This choice is far from random, and stems instead from a wish to prove that map-making is indeed an *ongoing* process, which, akin to the equally un-finished character of Canadian (petro)nation-building and frontier-making, is bound to progressively evolve and transform, according to the newly established power balances (and unbalances).

4.5. The North as a frontier: from fur trading to the Dominion of Canada

Although the first attempts to map the North of Canada can be traced already in the 16th century, when English seaman, privateer and explorer Martin Frobisher made his first voyage to the south-east of Baffin Island, we have to wait until the second half of 18th century for the most significant examples of Northern mapping. In this period, cartography became a business ran

mostly by British fur trading companies[46]. With increasing trading and exploration, maps were used to bring recognition to these companies (Ruggles, 1991), and to help consolidate their position of major participants in the European and North American trading business. As several authors have pointed out (Beattie, 1985; Rivard, 2008), the success of fur trading was highly dependent on the help of Natives, who actively participated in the business not only as guides, hunters or interpreters, but also as sketchers of the maps.

In 1867, the Dominion of Canada was formed, and, few years later, the Hudson's Bay Company agreed to surrender its control over great part of the North (i.e. Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory). In this regard, Matthew Dyce (2014, p. 5) notices that 'while the vast territory stretching from Manitoba west to the Rocky Mountains and north to the Arctic tundra was mapped by explorers and traders, the same region was also "terra nullius" for the designs of a modern liberal state'. In line with the goals of the Prime Minister John Macdonald, who wanted to expand the borders of the confederation and turn distant and wild lands into sovereign Canadian territory, mapping the North became thus a fundamental political priority. In this sense, the North of Canada started, even more than before, to be imagined as a *frontier*, i.e. a remote blank space not only to conquer and tame, but to enumerate, survey and reform. In order to do so, the *imagined* frontier had also to be *imaged* (Gismondi and Davidson, 2012), that is to say, it had to written onto maps, and sharply demarcated through imaginary lines and symbols separating the known and the unknown or, in other words, the settled from the (yet) unsettled. It is in these years that the Department of Interior emerged as the main organism in charge of the production and distribution of the maps of the territories (Figure 7).

[46] On the one hand, the Hudson Bay's Company with head surveyor Philip Turnor and junior surveyors David Thompson and Peter Fidler, and, on the other one, its competitor (before their mergence in 1821), the North West Company, whose main surveyors were Peter Pond first, and Alexander Mackenzie in a later stage.

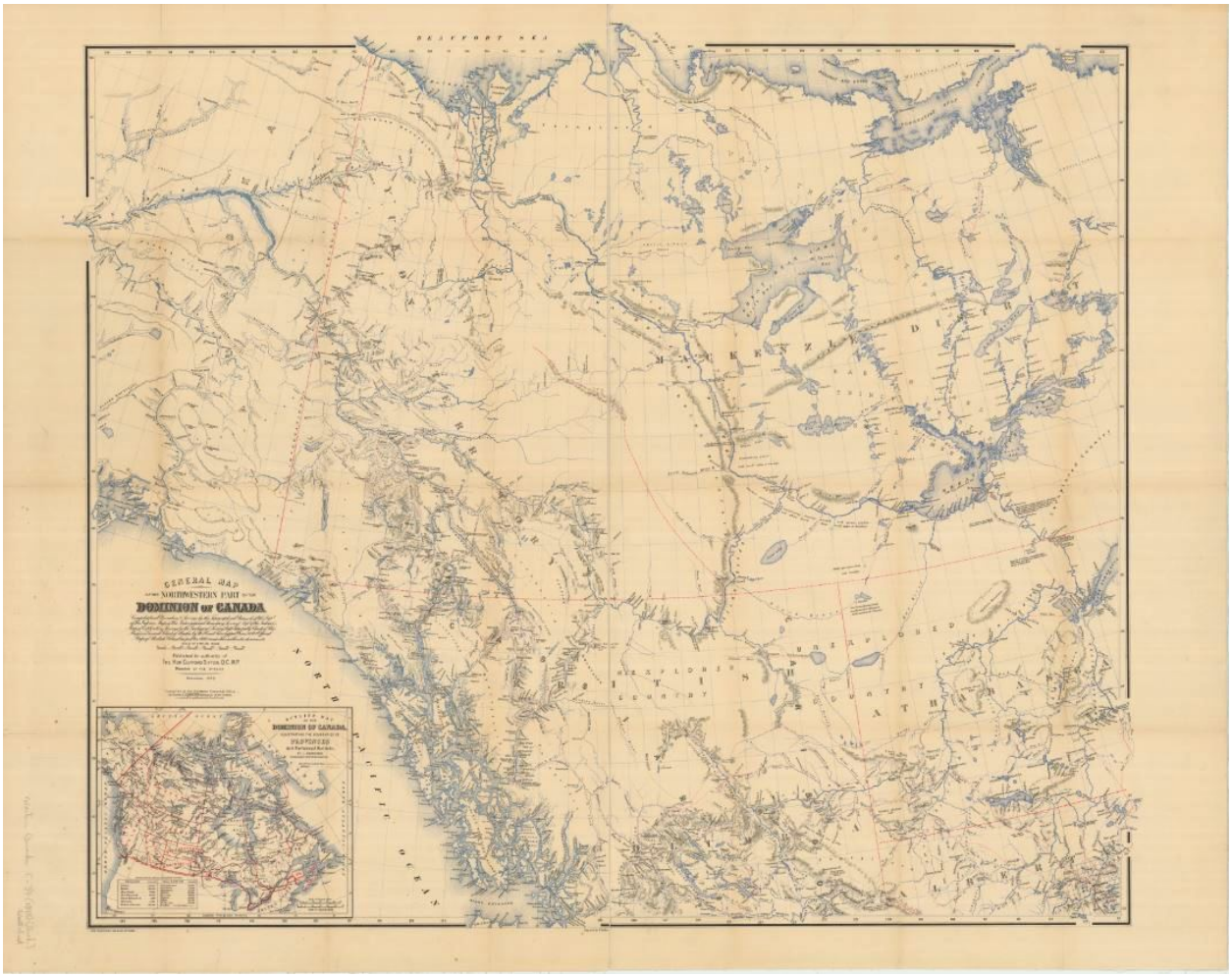


Figure 7. General Map of the Northwestern Part of the Dominion Canada, Department of Interior (1898) - The original map is located in the William C. Wonders Map Collection, University of Alberta, Edmonton (Canada).

One of the maps that I have come across during one of my long days sitting on the fourth floor of the Cameron Library (U of A) is the *General Map of the Northwestern Part of the Dominion of Canada*, published by the Department of the Interior in 1898. The map, quite large in scale, presents massive blank areas. The harshness and emptiness of the Northern environment is further reinforced by means of visual markers, such as the indicators 'vast treeless steppes' or 'barren lands', and finally, 'Unexplored country' dominating the centre of the map.

4.6. Mapping the energy frontier: selected thematic and resource maps

At the beginning of the 20th century, shortly after the discovery of gold in Yukon (1896) and few years before the first significant oil drilling in Norman Wells (1920), Canada was in the middle of an escalating hunt for resources. The economic incentives offered by resource exploitation made the need for geographical data become extremely urgent, prompting the federal government to accelerate map-making. During this period, cartographic representations of the

North of Canada started to be increasingly directed at showing more than a far and empty wilderness, as previously suggested (Figure 7), and rather, what was thought to be a resource hinterland. From the early 1900s, then, the long-standing myth of the Northern frontier starts to take a different connotation, evolving into a new spatial imaginary, namely what I have termed the 'energy frontier'. As suggested earlier, this specific kind of frontier-making, actively supported and enforced by maps, should not be considered an isolated endeavour. Rather, it is expression of an evolving (petro)nationalist project, embedded with a fundamental spatial dimension. In this regard, while the energy frontier can be seen as the elusive and yet extremely powerful spatial abstraction required by the petro-nationalist project, without its cartographic complement, this project would have lacked a high degree of efficacy and legitimation. In order *not* necessarily to *be* real, but to be *perceived* and *embraced* as real, the energy frontier had to materialize onto maps.

The following examples are therefore of maps, which, although being produced in different periods, share a particular ability to "enact" the energy frontier, in the sense of giving a concrete sense of the resources available in the North and thus, of visually anticipating oil and gas development. I have decided to start my investigation from the largest federal source of Canadian maps, i.e. the Atlas of Canada. By means of two maps, taken from the first (1906) and the fifth edition (1978) of the Atlas, I will show how, while apparently offering a comprehensive and organized overview of Canadian mineral (Figure 8) and energy resources (Figure 9a and 9b), such maps are instead actively promoting particular spatial imaginaries and paths of development.

Figure 8. 'Minerals'. Atlas of Canada (1906).
The map contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence - Canada.

"Minerals" - Atlas of Canada (1906)

The first edition of the Atlas of Canada[47] was published by the Department of the Interior in 1906. The Atlas was one of the world's first national atlases, and contained a large collection of thematic maps providing information on several topics such as Canada's geology, demographic data, transportation, etc. If the Atlas's historical value is in no way under scrutiny here, what I am interested in is to explore the kind of knowledge which is presented by and reinforced through the maps contained in the Atlas. In this sense, although the North of Canada is not the declared focus in either one of the two maps presented here, I suggest that a closer look reveals how this area is indeed demarcated and framed within a hidden structure of 'silences' and hierarchies (Harley, 1989).

The first thematic map (Figure 8) has been produced in the aftermath of the Klondike Gold Rush, and is therefore not dealing with oil and gas development, but, more specifically, with mineral

[47] In its fourth and fifth edition, the Atlas was renamed *National Atlas of Canada*.

extraction. Nevertheless, I have chosen to include it in my analysis because, as I believe, it provides a very good starting point for a discussion on frontier-making in connection with natural resource exploitation. The map shows the mineralogy and locations of mineral deposits in Western Canada (1906). Not only Alberta and its Coal District, but also Yukon and Northern British Columbia are represented through a common extractive denominator, by means of three areas in gold (i.e. Klondike Gold District, Kluane Gold District and Atlin Gold District), which stand out in the otherwise all-white background. Quite interestingly, besides the known provincial and national borders, and the entanglement of parallels and meridians, at the centre of the map, a new frontier emerges, visually represented by a red dotted line crossing the map and circumscribing the NWT. The line indicates that the Northern portion of the Dominion is still largely unprosecuted or, as quoted on the map, 'Country North of this line virtually unprospected except along some of the principal rivers'.

By introducing a new border where none existed before, a specific demarcation of space, as well as of the people and of the resources on the other side is encouraged. Recalling Prescott-Webb's observations on frontiers (1964), the map does not set a new limit or a stopping point, but, rather, evokes territorial notions of crossing, claiming and governing.

Canada - Energy, National Atlas of Canada (1978)

Between the two World Wars, there were no further large mapping initiatives carried out by the Department of the Interior. However, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the mapping of the Canadian North emerged as a fundamental state priority, urged by both military and economic necessities (Rodney, 2016). On the one hand, in fact, in the middle of the Cold War, the US and Canada had agreed to establish the Distant Early Warning Line (1957), a system of radars placed in several areas of the Arctic region, including the Canadian Arctic. On the other hand, in the same period, resource extraction became again a priority thanks to the discovery of minerals in the Precambrian Shield, and to increasing explorations in the Beaufort Sea. Although, during these years, the military had indeed a significant influence on the development of federal mapping, what I am interested in is the growing emphasis placed by cartography on resource extraction, and how the latter can be seen as part of a specific nation-building strategy. Bennett et al. (2016, pp. 632-633), in their study of state and Inuit maps of the North, notice how

'at least since the 1950s, the Government of Canada has attempted to integrate its northern regions into the nation (…) [while] paradoxically (…) routinely defin[ing] the North as a region apart from the rest of Canada'. Indeed, from its third volume (1958), the Atlas of Canada, now renamed 'National Atlas of Canada', started to be published by the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys[48]. From this moment, characterized by an increasing political and economic commitment to resource extraction in the North[49], many of the maps contained in the Atlas began also to highlight the extent of the natural resources available in the country, as well as the potential economic value of the latter. In this sense, one of the maps which immediately caught my attention for being so "eloquent" in its representation of Northern regions is a plate comprised of seven maps (Figure 9a).

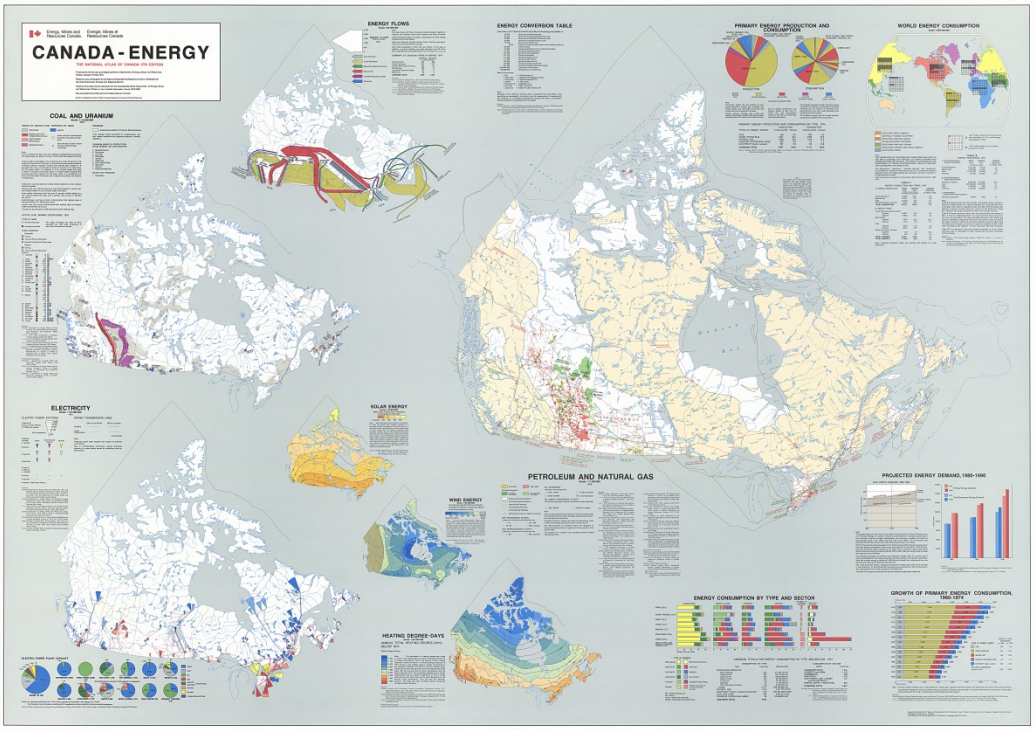


Figure 9 (a). *Canada-Energy*, National Atlas of Canada (1978)
The map contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence - Canada.

[48] The Department was formed in 1949 and later re-organized first in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and then, in the current Department of Natural Resources.
[49] It is worth to remind that between 1957 and 1958, Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker launched his 'Northern Vision', which urged the development of the North of Canada, including the construction of a large infrastructure project under the emblematic name 'Roads to Resources'.

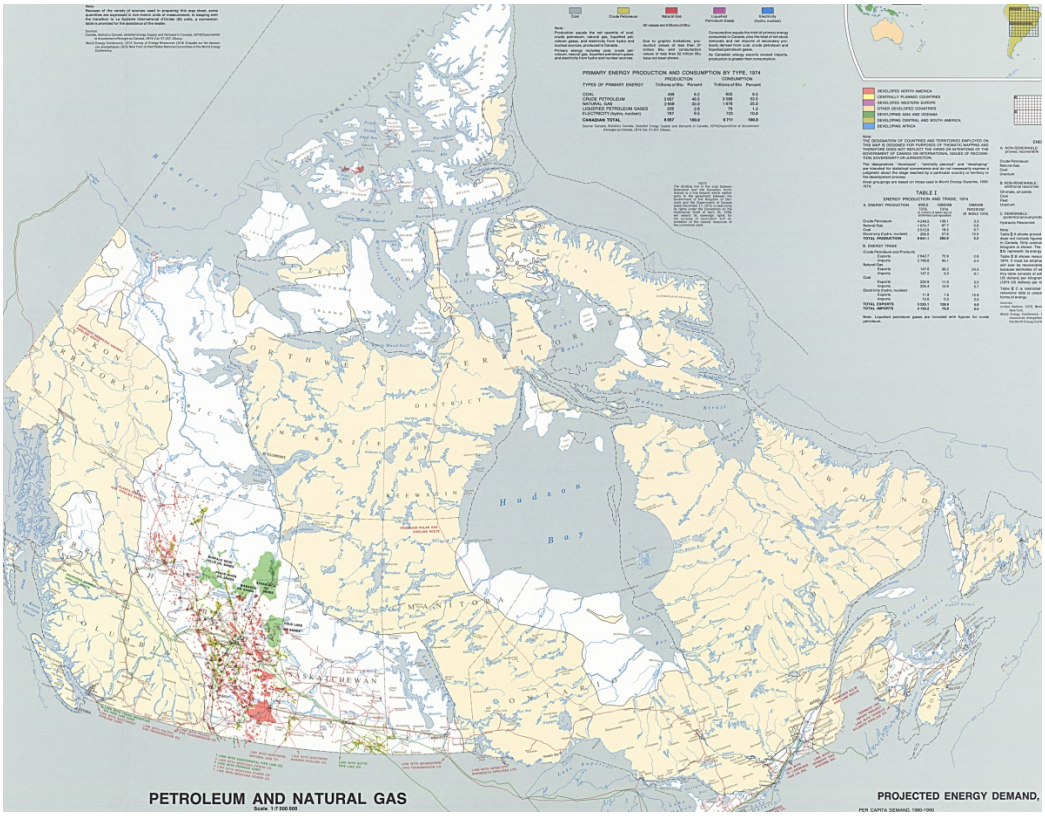


Figure 9 (b). Detail of *Canada-Energy.*

The thematic collection is part of the 5th edition of the National Atlas of Canada (1978 to 1995) and is simply titled 'Canada - Energy'. The seven maps, which vary in size and colour, are meant to offer a comprehensive overview of Canada's energy sources and of the location of different energy projects/facilities on the national territory. Quite interestingly, however, a visual hierarchy is immediately established. The bigger maps, respectively showing petroleum and natural gas production (at the centre), coal and uranium mining sites (in the top-right corner) and electricity stations (in the down-right corner), dominate the plate and strategically direct the attention to non-renewable energy sources. Far larger in scale than the others, the petroleum and natural gas map (Figure 9b) shows the country's oil and gas fields, pipelines and processing facilities. Although, as it appears, the majority of these are located in the Southern provinces, it is more the emptiness of the map to be suggestive than what is actually shown. The dense conglomerate of dots and lines signalling the presence of oil and gas fields and facilities expanding through the bottom part of the map seems to suddenly arrest in the proximity of the 60th parallel. Over the "frontier line", are only few dots and two stretching lines marking the

routes of two proposed pipelines through Yukon and the NWT. In spite of their undoubted significance, maps are not the only subject of the plate and should be examined in combination with the attached tables. On the left side, in fact, two graphs present the data of energy consumption and production, while the other two graphs on the bottom envision a progressive (and, apparently, unstoppable) rise in crude oil and natural gas demands.

Mapping the 'not there'

In the plate, the result of the association of the maps and the graphs is a selective assemblage of information, which, by means of omissions and strategic emphasis, works to provide a deeply biased vision of the future: namely, one where fossil fuel development is indeed deemed as a necessity, and where further explorations are therefore to be constantly urged and carried out. The North of the country is again represented as a blank space, yet filled with the hopes infused into the two pipeline projects. While the central map might be seen as documenting the growing development investing the South, I suggest that the real focus is instead once again the 'North', willingly depicted as empty in contrast with the other side, and thus even more convincingly presented as the natural continuation of the Southern extractive boom. By combining the image of an energy divided country together with data of a constantly rising demand, these maps do not only reinforce the vision of a nationally broad, 'Pancanadian' fossil fuel development, but provide a visual and spatial legitimation to it, and can thus be seen as responding to a government agenda of promoting further extractive projects.

While another example of federal map-making will be included in the next section (4.7), in what follows, I am going to briefly shift my focus and present two maps published by the Oil and Gas Department of two major Canadian banks.

Resource maps from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (1977) and Bank of Montreal (1985)

A common characteristic of the maps presented so far is the representation of the area lying above the 60th parallel as an unexplored blank space. If the omission of place names is indeed one of the most straightforward evidences of what Harley (1988a) calls 'distortions of map content', I suggest that maps have represented the North not only as *socially-empty*, but also as *industry-populated.*

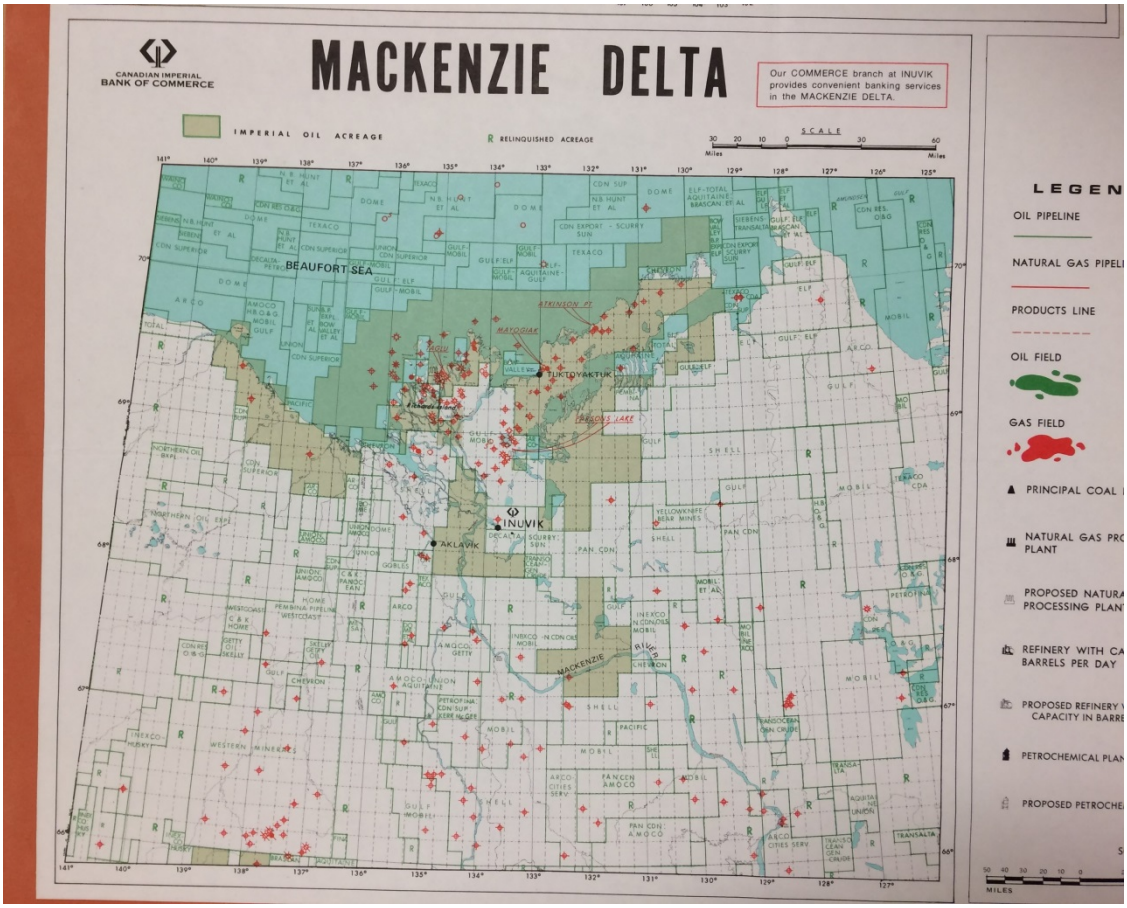


Figure 10. Detail. 'Mackenzie Delta'. Canadian Petroleum Highlights. 1977. Imperial Bank of Commerce. The original map is located in the William C. Wonders Map Collection, University of Alberta, Edmonton (Canada).

Figure 11 (a). Oil and Gas Frontier Exploration Areas (1985). Bank of Montreal. The original map is located in the William C. Wonders Map Collection, University of Alberta, Edmonton (Canada).

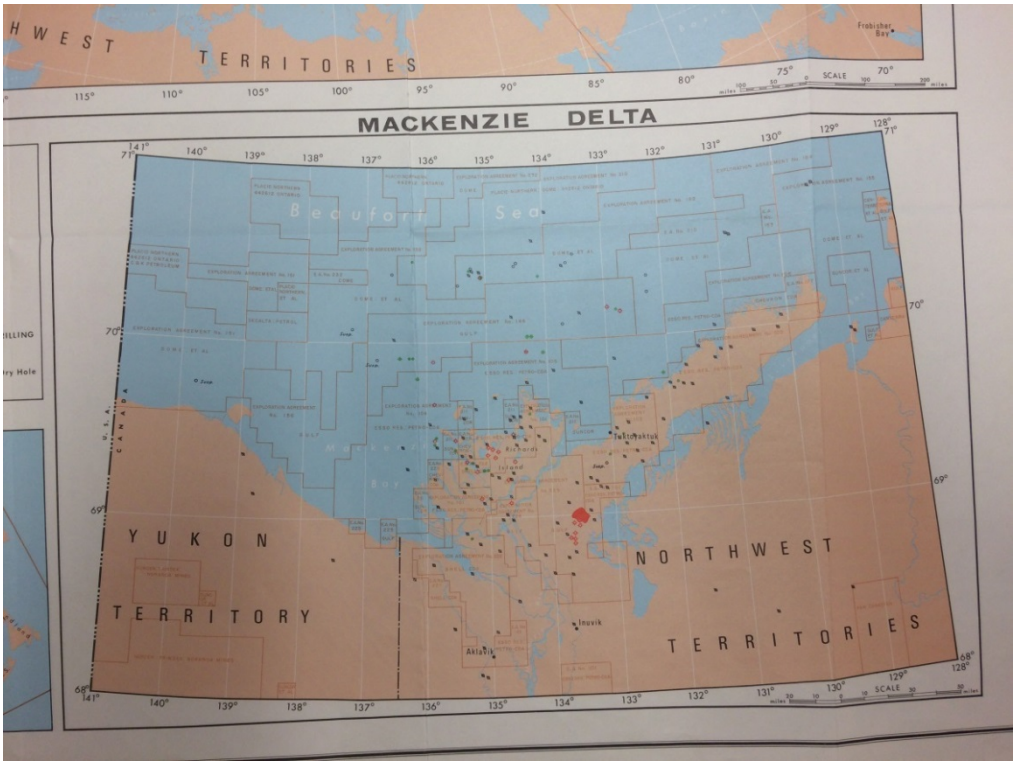


Figure 11 (b). Detail 'Mackenzie Delta'. Oil and Gas Frontier Exploration Areas (1985).

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, one specific area of the Canadian Artic, namely the Northwest Territories, was brought back into the spotlight after significant hydrocarbon discoveries in the Mackenzie River Basin and Arctic islands. The resource maps hereby attached were published during those years, specifically in 1977 (Figure 10) and 1985 (Figure 11a and 11b), by the oil and gas departments of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and the Bank of Montreal.

After the discovery of a rich deposit of oil in Leduc in 1947, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce became the first Canadian bank to open its own oil and gas department, which, throughout the 1970s, emerged as a major source of financing for many petroleum-related industries (Bain, 1983). While the Bank of Montreal established a similar department almost twenty years later (1962), it also became an important financial supporter of the extractive sector. By the 1980s, the Bank ranked in the global top ten for syndicated loans to the oil industry, and, more recently, it has provided one of the biggest financing projects associated with the Alberta's tar sands (Mussio, 2016).

Both maps presented here are part of a larger plate comprising several smaller maps. Being directly connected to my case study - the construction of the MVP - I have decided to focus on the maps of the Mackenzie Delta (Figure 9 and 10b), which show active and inactive oil and gas fields, as well as existent and prospective extractive facilities.

The maps are indeed very similar to each other in their content and modes of representation. I have found the map published by the Bank of Montreal particularly interesting and worth of being included in this analysis due to its headline: 'Oil & Gas Frontier Exploration Areas of Canada' (Figure 11a). While the headline can be regarded as the most evident sign of the longevity of the frontier imaginary in oil and gas exploration (and related cartographic efforts), it is definitely not the only indicator of the persistence of such thinking. A closer look at both maps reveals in fact more than the usual omissions, and namely, a specific way of defining and demarcating the North. If geographic details such as place names and even geological features are again merely visible, what instead comes out as extremely prominent is the diffused presence of oil and gas companies on the territory. It results that the Mackenzie Valley is configured not only as a frontier, but as one on which the petroleum industry has firmly established its control. The whole area, deprived of its historical, social and cultural significance,

is represented through the two maps as a deeply fractured space, where new borders emerge and older ones disappear.

In both the maps, however, the North is not only configured as a demarcated space. Rather, in what almost resembles a mosaic, where the titles are here symbolized by portions of territory "owned" by the companies, the maps show a North which has been *partitioned* among industry stakeholders. Recalling Benedict Anderson's observations on the 'map-as-logo' (2006, p. 175), each place on the map appears 'wholly detached from its geographic context (…) like a detachable piece of a jigsaw puzzle'. The final result is visually-striking, and reminding very much of colonial mapping experiments. The majority of towns, villages, rivers and mountains have all been replaced by the names of the companies, such as 'Shell', 'Esso', 'Suncor', as well as by the numbers of the different 'Exploration Agreements'. In this regard, the naming of each section of the map, according to the companies operating in the area, might be associated, by extension, with the colonial act of *naming*, a practice which has been widely used in order to claim and assert ownership over territory.

4.7. Contemporary cartographic efforts: Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals (GEM)

Previously quoted critical geographer John Harley (1989, p.11) wrote:

> In modern Western society maps quickly became crucial to the maintenance of state power — to its boundaries, to its commerce, to its internal administration, to control of populations, and to its military strength. Mapping soon became the business of the state.

At the beginning of this analysis, I presented two maps from the Atlas of Canada, which, as I have argued, constitute two examples of how the state has actively made use of cartography for nation-building purposes, i.e. 'to impart a sense of the nation to Canadian and non-Canadian viewers' (Steinberg and Kristoffersen, 2017, p. 627). Departing from the same argument, what I want to point out now is that map-making, as much as (petro-)nation-building, is indeed an ongoing process, which has continued to develop at great speed also in more recent times. In this sense, quoting Fraley (2010, p. 422), it is extremely important '[to] offer a reminder that the power of maps is not a thing of the past, but rather a thing of the present'. Far from being some old and anachronistic historical artefacts, maps are continuously produced, and, especially in the

case of Canadian federal mapping, still constitute a significant source of information on natural resource extent and economic potential.

Drawing from so-called 'post-representational' cartography (Kitchin, Gleseson and Dodge, 2013) and its attention to the process of map-making rather than uniquely to the products of this process (i.e. maps), in this final section, I am going to examine one of the largest Canadian mapping initiatives of the decade: the Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals (GEM).

The GEM was launched in 2008[50], during the first mandate of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who, as previously noted, made northern development and the transformation of Canada into an 'energy superpower' fundamental political priorities (Harrington and Lecavalier, 2014; Medalye and Foster, 2012; Way, 2011). The program, which was allocated 100 million Canadian dollars from the Federal Budget, ran until 2013 and was renewed the same year until 2020 with a new huge federal investment. In the day marking the beginning of its Second Phase, Harper (2013) stressed that the project should be seen as part of the government's efforts '[to] ensure that northerners and all Canadians benefit from the tremendous natural resources in the territories[51]'. By emphasizing a commonality of interests and opportunities shared by 'all Canadians', Harper constantly attempted to imbue the mapping initiative with a cross-boundary, unifying national character, which, in combination with its placement in a solid scientific framework, made the project look not only generally beneficial, but also deeply reliable as a source of future revenue and employment.

[50] While announcing the launch of the GEM, Harper (quoted in Nation Talk, 2008) said that the aim of the project was: 'to continue the bold tradition of exploration that has defined our history, and to strengthen our understanding and our sovereignty over a region that will define our future'.
[51] The three northern territories of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Figure 12. *Geomapping the North by 2020*.
From the main webpage of the GEM (2017)[52].

The ambiguity of publicity

The GEM has indeed produced a huge amount of material during its first five years of activity. Far from intending to question the accuracy or the validity of the data collected during the initiative, the aim is here twofold: (1) to shed a critical light on the process of federal map-making associated with the GEM and, by highlighting some of its explicit or implicit features,

[52] The picture contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence - Canada.

(2) to reflect on the political nature of thematic/resource maps. In order to do so, I am not going to examine any specific map of the project - as otherwise done by Bennett et al. (2016) in their extremely illuminating article 'Articulating the Arctic: Contrasting State and Inuit Maps of the Canadian North' - but, rather, I am going to focus on the way the GEM is presented through official government channels. In this sense, one of the main elements of the project, which has been proudly advertised since the very beginning, is its *publicity*. On the leaflet 'Geomapping the North by 2020' (Figure 11), downloadable from the webpage of the program, we learn that, through the initiative, 'new knowledge is made publicly available' (Natural Resources Canada, 2017), in order to be used by a wide range of actors, such as 'Northerners', industry, entrepreneurs, prospectors, etc. As a matter of fact, the website does indeed provide access to an extensive list of publications, including geological maps, reports and data-sets. However, different indicators in the webpage suggest that the purpose behind the project's commitment to publicity is all but abstract. Rather than strictly finalized to encouraging wider knowledge dissemination or scientific transparency, the accessibility of the maps and reports appears to have a deep *proactive* meaning. The geological data are, in fact, meant to be concretely used by the interested parties in their efforts to support land claims, to secure better investments, and, as stressed in the video-presentation of the GEM, '[to help] northerners and industry to find common ground'. This means that publicity should here not only be understood and practiced as some abstract normative principle, but as a *tool* which is expected to assist a variety of actors in their path towards development. In other words, scientific information has an instrumental value, i.e. it is made public in order to be used and, accordingly, in order to encourage some kind of transformation.

The strong emphasis on publicity should be analysed in strict connected with another element, i.e. the assumed 'democratic' character of the knowledge contained in the GEM, an important feature which is meant to characterize both its production and consumption phase. Regarding the first one, although the program is primarily led by the Geological Survey of Canada in collaboration with university experts, community engagement is proudly mentioned both as constituting the first stage of research (Figure 12), and as representing one of the key activities of the program. Besides for the involvement of a variety of actors in its production, the initiative seems to be in line with current efforts of knowledge democratization also when it comes to its

consumption dimension. Open to being accessed and utilized without any formal restriction by a plurality of entities, the GEM appears to comply with increasing public demands for accountability; demands which have been directed not only towards governments, but also towards the corporate sector, especially in the area of natural resource extraction.

However, in light of the previous considerations on cartography's omissions, the same publicity of the GEM raises multiple questions on what kind of data, and thus knowledge, is *not* made public. In many of the publications resulting from the initiative, the circumstances of scientific production are not directly addressed, particularly when it comes to the so flaunted aspect of 'community engagement'. If the Phase 2 of the project (2013-2020) might be addressing the issue by encouraging geographic training within the communities, it is not very clear how indigenous peoples have been involved so far, in what way their knowledge has been incorporated, and whether they truly share an interest in the goals of the project. While the initiative is declaredly meant to represent different interests and to benefit a wide range of actors, including local communities, a major visibility and access seems to be ultimately granted, once again, to the extractive industry. In this sense, in the webpage of project, it is stated that 'this information is increasingly being used by the private sector in Canada and around the world, as it helps mineral and energy exploration companies reduce their risks and exploration costs' (Natural Resources Canada, 2017). On the same wavelength, a section dedicated to the results of the first phase highlights that 'the above research has resulted in new exploration investments by over 100 companies, generating $40 million in direct employment opportunities and indirect investments of over $300 millions'. Therefore, although communities' involvement might have been translated into direct employment, the scarcity of more detailed information regarding indigenous contribution to the process of map-making makes the GEM's publicity ultimately unclear and rather ambiguous.

Turning Potentiality into Reality

During the launch of its second phase, the GEM was presented by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2013) as an opportunity '[to] promote resource exploration in the region'. If the government's openness concerning the goals of the second phase of the initiative might counterbalance the potential ambiguity characterizing the modes of production (as well as the

results) of the first phase, I suggest that the same ambiguity lies indeed in the way map-making can be strategically used to anticipate the future.

If the visual power of cartography has often constituted a useful asset to legitimize and support territorial aspirations, in the same way, map-making activities within the GEM might indeed have been inspired by an urgency to turn the potentiality (e.g. of discovery, of jobs, of land ownership) into a solid and concrete reality. In this regard, in the transcript from the video-presentation of the project, the word 'future' is suggestively repeated multiple times. The narrator explains that 'the Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals Program is helping the North to make decisions to help guide its future' and concludes, with what sounds like a prophetic tone: 'we know there is a lot of resource potential in Canada's North, but we need to understand the past and how it shaped the land so that choices can be made for the future'. Terms such as 'future', 'potential', 'not yet' are disseminated throughout the GEM website, and, together with the intrinsically "promissory" quality of many of the published maps[53] contribute to shaping a state of expectation and confidence.

According to geographer Matthew Sparke (1998), mapping has 'proleptic' effects, in the sense that '[maps] contribute to the construction of spaces that later they seem to only represent' (p. 466). Upon these considerations, I suggest that the whole GEM, under the guise of a mere scientific pursuit, actively participates in the configuration of the North as an energy frontier, i.e. as a space where potentiality is discursively transformed into reality, and where inherently particular industrial interests and goals become suddenly invested with a national legitimation.

4.8. Conclusions: on the nation-building power of cartography

Behind any cartographic effort are 'the hidden agendas of cartography' (Harley, 1988b), i.e. the not-too-explicit reasons motivating map-making initiatives. By means of a small (and in no way comprehensive) selection of maps, I have attempted to show how Canadian cartography, through imaginary lines, blank spaces and the shifting hopes generated by untapped resources and unbuilt infrastructures - i.e. overall, thanks more to absences than presences - has provided a powerful visual support to the discursive formation of frontiers. Drawing upon Maurice Charland's concept of technological nationalism (1986) and the work of critical cartographers such as John

[53] 38 geological studies from 2008 to 2017 contain the word 'potential' in their title.

Brian Harley (1989), I have thus argued that maps have substantially contributed to nation-building. The way they have done so has been by engaging with space as much as with time. By making the "underground" (i.e. oil and gas) increasingly visible, incorporating the North and its resources into an abstract 'national space' and sustaining a constant state of expectation and anxiety, cartography has made it possible for the state and the industry to claim sovereignty over resources, and to eventually manage them, together with the lives of the people living in their proximity.

Through maps like the ones presented in the section, new boundaries are traced, agreements are signed, communities are relocated, and a whole complex of social (and power) relations is renegotiated. Maps then do not only represent, but actively produce and reproduce space, and shape futures according to particular (and often only assumedly "national") ambitions and strategies. As vividly pointed out by anthropologist James C. Scott (1998, p. 3) in this regard,

> [Maps] did not successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted, nor were they intended to; they represented only that slice which interested the official observer. They were, moreover, not just maps. Rather, they were maps that, when allied with state power, would enable much of the reality they depicted to be remade.

Many of the maps that I have selected for this analysis can be included in the category of thematic maps or resource maps, that is to say maps which come together with an intrinsic character of credibility and reliance. To argue against the scientific objectivity of these maps has therefore been particularly difficult and challenging. To make an example of this predicament, while many geographers agree on the fact that maps have significantly supported the practice of place naming, it might definitely be considered more unusual, and thus less convincing, to suggest that resource or thematic maps can work as modern expressions of colonial claiming and appropriation attempts. However, I insist that to look at maps with critical eyes entails to dig deeper into the discursive strategies behind their production, and thus, not to limit the analysis to what stands out as most evident, comprehensible and straightforward. While resource maps as well as many other more 'technical' cartographic representations of the North might initially seem not very suggestive of any particular view, I have found out that, with a closer look, they reveal themselves as very elusive, yet no less powerful tools of governance. In this regard,

concerning the development of thematic mapping in America, Susan Schulten (2012, p. 2) observes that 'if traditional topographic maps were akin to description, thematic maps functioned more like an argument, and this made them particularly relevant for science, social science, education, and governance'. Ultimately, "to-deconstruct" these maps means then to move beyond their technical jargon and the apparent objectiveness of their long lists of credentials, and to expose their intrinsically political (and potentially manipulative) nature.

The Northwest 'energy frontier' constructed by state maps is a flat and homogeneous space, where differences are ruled out in favour of a common extractive denominator. However, the political and legal transformations taking place in the North over the last fifty years, and the persistent struggles over the control of Northern resources destabilize this vision, and reveal indeed a much more diverse and contested spatiality than the one emerging from official maps. In light of these considerations, in the next chapter, I am going to focus on the role of Northern aboriginal people in the production of the energy frontier, by digging into their history of participation - or lack thereof - in Northern resource development. When discussing frontier-making and maintenance, the position of the "frontierized" is often not taken into proper consideration. I suggest instead that to pay attention to this position might be particularly useful in order to better grasp the complexity of the ever-changing geographies of hydrocarbon extraction.

Chapter 5. The role of aboriginal people in the Northwest energy frontier.

5.1. From a *territorial* to a *relational* understanding of frontiers

In the previous chapter, I have emphasized how inherent to petro-nationalist strategies are specific territorial practices (such as state mapping) aimed at shaping a governable space which clearly defines who belongs and who does not. Through maps, specific spatial imaginaries such as the 'energy frontier' have been, as Rob Shields (2013, p. 184) suggests, 'accorded the status of real, physical object rather than a feature of historical spatialisation of Canada'. Within Canadian petro-nation-building, the imagining of the Northwest energy frontier has served a specific purpose: to turn the North into a homogeneous, legible and thus, governable space. *However,* at the same time, I believe that to embrace a strictly territorial reading of the dense spatiality of frontiers would fail to recognize their fundamental diversity and elusiveness. Frontiers are in fact rarely uncontested and immutable territorial entities, and rather, emerge as messy, porous and dynamic borders (Massey, 1994; Yacobi, 2015), which resist attempts to imbue them with a singular identity. In this regard, although acknowledging their territorial essence, Weizman (2012, p. 4) writes, 'against the geography of stable, static places, and the balance across linear and fixed sovereign borders, frontiers are deep, shifting, fragmented and elastic territories'.

For this reason, I would like here to argue for adopting a *relational* perspective on the study of frontiers and frontier-making, which can be used to integrate (and not necessarily to replace) a strictly *territorial* one. In fact, while the latter often comes with the limitation of taking territory for granted - as pointed out by Agnew (1994) in his notion of the 'territorial trap'[54] - the first does take into consideration the multiple influences and contributions to territorial formations. As observed by Novak (2011, p. 744),

> in this relational sense, in fact, territories and populations defined by the process of bounding are not static terrains; they are vibrant entities possessing specific "attributes", which enter into direct contact with governmental rationalities, *producing* territoriality from one point to the next, and in every relation.

[54] Here, Agnew questions static views of 'the territorial state as an unchanging entity rather than in terms of its significance and meaning in different historical-geographical circumstances' (p.1).

My understanding of energy frontiers as relational spaces is not solely motivated by their characteristic of being liminal or "in-between spaces", but stems more broadly from the assumption that energy itself is ontologically relational, i.e. that it can only be understood by taking into account the large complex of infrastructures, people, places, bureaucracies and interests that are involved its production, distribution and consumption. It is in this sense that I suggest that the energy frontier, as one of the multiple geographies shaped by and actively shaping specific energy systems, can indeed only be conceived as both a territorial *and* a relational space (Barney, 2009), dynamically co-constituted and mutually (although differently) experienced by a multiplicity of actors. The reason why I do not find a relational understanding of frontiers in opposition with the acknowledgement of the territorial practices informing their production is effectively exemplified by Cochrane (2013, p. 95), according to whom, '"relational" thinking does not mean the end of territory, but rather reinforces the need to identify how territories are made up, constructed or assembled'.

5.2. The agency of the "frontierized"

In the studies of several scholars (Barney, 2009; Peluso and Lund, 2013; Rasmussen and Lund, 2017; Rifkin, 2014; Tsing, 2011), the imagining, making and governing of frontiers has been addressed as a process deeply entangled in scaled interactions and uneven power relations. In this sense, resource frontiers have been regarded as 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1991), i.e. sites of often violent encounters between contrasting practices and visions (Rasmussen and Lund, 2017) or as 'relational zones of exploitation, opportunity, conflict and contestation' (Nuttall, 2015). In such conceptualizations of frontiers and frontier-making processes, there is however an element, not always explicitly pointed out by the authors, which I consider instead of fundamental importance to understand why frontiers are such contested spatialities, namely what I will term here *the agency of the frontierized***.** While resource frontiers are often seen as a prerogative of capitalist forces (whether these are embodied by the state or by extractive industries), they are ultimately articulated, maintained and reproduced by a variety of actors, who, at different scales, actively engage with them. Whether it is to challenge or to support frontier formations, marginalized people are nevertheless somehow involved in the "sticky" (Ahmed, 2010) frontier-negotiation and, accordingly, cannot but imbue this space with new and possibly contrasting perspectives. It is in this specific regard that Barney (2009), who refers to Laos as a

'patchworked frontier' (p. 152) due to the different modes of spatial production and governance which are here at work, notes that 'locality, communities and rural ecological landscapes emerge with a significant degree of agency, articulated and constructed in relation to an assemblage of other actors and processes' (p. 148).

While previous considerations on Canada's oil and gas history (Chapter 3) and petro-nation-building (Chapter 4) might lead to think that the federal government and the industry are the only relevant actors of energy (spatial) politics, I intend to show here that this is not the case. Canadian aboriginal people have, especially in the North, been not only deeply affected by the hunt for resources, but have also increasingly used hydrocarbon extraction as a powerful leverage to advance a wide range of claims. For this reason, while my *first* key choice has been to look at Canadian oil and gas development through the category of 'space', my *second* one now is to explore the spatial (and temporal) dimensions of this development through the experiences, the understandings and the voices of Northern aboriginal people. In light of these considerations, I intend to expand my conceptualization of the Northwest energy frontier so to consider also the role of the "frontierized" - i.e. aboriginal people - in its production and transformation. This means specifically to attempt to grasp the elusiveness of their agency (or lack thereof), and to explore what kind of hybrid space is the one ultimately resulting from the interaction and constant overlap of aboriginal and non-aboriginal narratives and interests. Northern aboriginal people have both challenged and combined non-aboriginal views of land, future and resources. I believe that navigating their history (in this Chapter), and then narrowing the focus to the testimonies (in Chapter 6 and 7) which many of them presented during the negotiation of a key megaproject, the MVP, can help me unravel and better understand the complexity of Canadian energy politics and energy-related transformations.

5.3. Northern aboriginal people and hydrocarbon development

As it has emerged from the previous chapters, the majority of maps and historical accounts of Canadian North - and of the Arctic in general (Bravo and Sörlin, 2002) - has either narrated a socially empty land or a space of wilderness, danger and exceptionality waiting to be explored, conquered and tamed. Native populations, when not completely neglected, have been an integral part of these stories: depicted as odd, friendly, "noble savages" (e.g. the happy Eskimo, the

Indian princess), and ultimately incorporated into the exotic(ized) landscape. In spite of such superficial and essentialist representations, which have frequently been used to infantilize them, and prevent them from advancing claims on their lands and resources, Northern aboriginal people[55] have indeed been a stable and fundamental presence across Canada's Northern regions. More often than not silenced and marginalized, First Nations, Inuit and Métis have contributed to the making of the North, and especially throughout the last decades, have increasingly challenged old and exclusionary ideas of 'nordicity' by means of more multi-faceted and self-representative tropes. I consider this massive discursive shift and the wider process of indigenous re-appropriation currently advancing throughout Canada extremely meaningful and likely to be better understood if addressed in connection with the history of northern resource development. In this sense, some of the key questions that will guide me through this chapter are: How have Northern aboriginal people been included in (or excluded from) Northern Canada's hydrocarbon development? Has the 'energy frontier' eventually disappeared or has it rather been loaded with new, diverse and contested dimensions? I am going to try to answer these questions by tracing a brief, but hopefully illuminating historical overview of Northern aboriginal participation in oil and gas development.

Early contacts

> Before [Alexander] Mackenzie's journey and the arrival of fur traders to the region, indigenous Dene who lived along the Mackenzie River—or the Deh cho ("great river") as they called it—did not need European explorers to tell them about oil in the area (…) It is likely they also considered it to be a resource of cultural and economic importance and used it as an item of trade in their dealings with other indigenous groups before European contact (Nuttall, 2010a, p.39).

As illustrated in Chapter 3, first contacts between Natives and European traders and explorers have been mostly filtered by the interest of the latter in the natural resources spread across Northern territories. For long time, Native people acted as trappers, informants, and guides for the many non-Native visitors traveling through their lands, and first, hunting for furs and, later

[55] By Northern aboriginal people, I refer here to the First Nations (mostly Dene, Cree, Gwich'in), Inuit and Métis located in Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

on, for minerals and hydrocarbons. Several scholars (Abel, 2005; Abele, 2009; Bennett and Rowley, 2004; Dick, 2001; Fossett, 2001; Innis, 1999) notice how, in the period of early contact, local groups of Natives were often willing to engage in multiple relations with the incomers - of economic, social or defensive nature - and were overall left free to retain traditional customs and practices. As observed by Goldring (1986, p. 252),'such partnerships, whether equal or not, allowed aboriginal societies in contact with Euro-Americans to retain essential elements of their ideology, social structure and way of life even when superficially subordinated to a nonindigenous system of production'.

In 1763, at the end of the Seven Years War between Britain and France, the British Crown took a stand in relation to the ownership of Native lands by issuing *The Royal Proclamation*. The document was meant to establish settlement boundaries in the aftermath of the war through the concept of 'Aboriginal title', which acknowledged the rights of aboriginal people on all lands not ceded by or purchased from them, although ultimately retaining sovereignty in the hands of the Crown. The Royal Proclamation became a fundamental landmark, bound to deeply affect the relations between Natives and settlers, now framed within a new institutional structure. In this sense, the most immediate consequence of the framework introduced by the document was the system of treaty-making. This system started to be employed by the newly formed federal government (1867) from 1871, in order to extinguish Native title to the fertile territories of Western Canada in exchange for money, supplies, reserves and other guarantees. The opening of lands for agricultural settlement and the building of infrastructures such as the Canadian Pacific Railway connecting British Columbia to Ontario were only undoubtedly important factors in the signing of the first group of Numbered Treaties (1-7) with aboriginal groups from Southern Canada. On the other hand, in spite of multiple speculations on its potential, the North remained of little interest to the federal government for almost twenty years, and was therefore left out of the treaty-making process.

Things changed abruptly when gold was discovered in Yukon in the late 1890s. This event did not only bring thousands of prospectors to the area, but provided also the necessary incentive for the first two treaties to be signed in the North (Coates, 1991; Fumoleau, 2004), namely Treaty 8 (1899) and Treaty 10 (1906-07). Similarly, few decades later, it took another extractive boom, the Norman Wells oil strike in 1920, to trigger the negotiation of the very last treaty, namely

Treaty 11. The treaty, signed in 1921 between First Nations (mostly Gwich'in, Tlicho and Sahtu) and the Canadian Government, covered more than 950.000 square kilometres of land extending through present-day territories of Yukon, NWT and Nunavut.

Early history of aboriginal rights is thus deeply entangled with that of the country's escalating resource hunt. The resource-rich North, regardless of whether real or imagined, became soon more than an exciting business opportunity, but a much more elusive and mutable promise attracting different actors, from investors and federal politicians to local Native groups[56]. In a letter addressed to the Minister of the Interior in November 1920, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs writes: 'the Indians themselves are very anxious to be taken into Treaty' (quoted in Fumoleau, 2004, p. 207). Although the letter does obviously not reflect the complex reality of aboriginal-non aboriginal relations, it hints at the fact that land-surrender treaties were often supported and encouraged by Natives themselves. The hope, among many of them, was to use the treaties as leverage, in order to get the support of the government to cope with the rapidly changing economic environment, and the multiple issues and dilemmas associated with the latter.

Not-so-isolated North: Second World War and the post-war interventionist agenda

Contrary to expectations, until the first half of the twentieth century, state presence in the North remained relatively scarce. The event that triggered a sudden change was the outbreak of the Second World War, which started raising major concerns for state sovereignty and security, and thus gave the North a central role in the fragile war balances. As previously pointed out, during the war, United States and Canada temporarily pushed their historic competition aside to join forces and counteract the common Eastern enemy. In this atmosphere of great turbulence and insecurity, the North became the point from where to organize an effective counteroffensive: a strategy which was soon translated into a huge infrastructure effort. Throughout the 1940s, the construction of the Alaska Highway, of the CANOL pipeline and of several new roads massively increased the traffic along the Mackenzie River, bringing a variety of people beyond the 60th parallel. Native groups became directly involved in these enterprises (Coates and Morrison, 2015; McKenzie-Brown, 2013), both as civilians and as members of the armed forces. In the

[56] An impressive and very fascinating account of the industrialization of Canada's s Subarctic, and of the impact of the latter on human-environment relations is provided by Liza Piper (2009) in her book *The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada.*

years to follow, when the Cold War intensified US presence in the North, many Natives continued to be drawn to the sites of activity, attracted by the possibility of employment and of better life conditions. The energy frontier vaguely envisioned and dreamily idealized by the early explorers was now adjusting its contours and acquiring a new connotation, thanks to the "isolated" North becoming less and less isolated (Dickerson, 1992), and to the aboriginal communities increasingly part (though still not the main drivers) of this development. In this regard, Francis Abele (2009, p. 27) notes that 'as with the introduction of the welfare state, the changes brought by accelerated development of northern resources were driven by forces outside the North and controlled in distant centres'.

The aftermath of WWII started under the banner of an interventionist agenda, established in response to the growing pressure exercised by the American presence in the North; a presence which was perceived as overwhelming by the federal government, and posing a direct threat to Canadian sovereignty. If, during the years of the war, Canada and United States had often collaborated to fight the foreign enemy, now, the American influence on Canadian politics and economy (including oil production), as well as the insisting criticism from the American press regarding the treatment of aboriginal people in Northern Canada were seen as evidences of a growing interference in the country's national affairs. As a result, government and industrial activities started to accelerate at a great speed throughout the Northern provinces, with many federal cabinets between 1950s and 1960s[57] placing the North at the centre of their political and economic agendas. The main consequence of this new turn was an increasing control by the federal administration not only on Northern natural resources, but also on the lives of Northern residents, especially 'Indians' and 'Eskimos'[58]. The speech delivered on the 8th of December 1953 to the House of Commons by Prime Minister St-Laurent (1953) can be seen as revelatory of this new approach directed at progressively integrating Native peoples into the wage economy:

57 See, for example, Louis St. Laurent's (1948-57) integrationist efforts, and John Diefenbaker's Roads to Resources (1957-63) and famous 'Canada of the North'.
58 The terms 'Indian' and 'Eskimo' are here uniquely used with reference to the terminology of the time, including the one contained in historical documents (e.g. Indian Act). Therefore, their presence in the chapter should in no way be interpreted as a way to encourage their use in the present.

> Apparently we have administered these vast territories of the north in an almost continuing state of absence of mind (…) We in the southern part of Canada have been so busy in recent years that we have given little close attention to the north country (…) [We] will have to give close attention to what can be done to integrate the native Eskimo population into the development, and probably the administration also, of parts of the northern areas.

The speech welcomed also the establishment of the new Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (DNANR), an organism created with the specific aim of strengthening federal presence in the North. The idea was to accelerate Northern economic and political development by creating a solid administrative apparatus, which would take care of several aspects of Northern life - from healthcare to education, from housing to management of natural resources. For the first time, the term 'northern affairs' was introduced in a federal organism, although, perhaps not very surprisingly, in combination with the denomination 'national' to describe the ownership of the resources; a choice of terms signalling a prompt assertion of sovereignty by the federal government. With regard to the work of the DNANR and the transformations soon brought by its establishment, Canadian writer Jim Lotz (1970, p. 19) observes:

> The familiar split between the local view and the national view, between the edge and the centre soon appeared. The Department's aim was to make the north Canadian and this was equated with creating a southern Canadian lifestyle in the vast lands beyond sixty. Bureaucracy came north. In 1954-55, forty-two agencies employing 2,954 full-time people operated in the north.

The machinery of northern development consisted of a wide array of people, policies and bureaucracies, which were meant to bring a fundamental change in the North, as part of the broader project of making the territories - and the people - beyond the 60th parallel fully "Canadian". Such integrationist efforts were made particularly explicit in the DNANR Annual Report (Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1965), which stated:

> Integration into the national life and activities will follow progressively (…) As the opportunities for employment in mining, construction, lumbering and agriculture increase in the

> District of Mackenzie and in the Yukon, each succeeding generation will see more Indians fully integrated into our industrial economy and our national life (pp. 10-17).

The association of 'Indians', 'industrial economy' and 'national life' is far from casual, and instead reveals the tight entanglement between the constant pursuit of resource exploitation and the construction of a Canadian identity firmly linked to the latter. In connection with the observations made in the previous chapter about the discursive strategies of petro-nation-building, these lines are essentially hinting at the fact that the plan of integrating the North and its inhabitants into the growing resource economy was not only motivated by economic and political reasons. Rather, it was meant to fulfil a fundamental requirement of nationhood. It is probably in this period, more than ever before, that the Northwest frontier undergoes a whole series of attempts to define it, to demarcate it and to hasten its development; in other words, to turn it into an "administrable" object. No longer an empty *terra nullius*, a land of no one, the frontier is now configured as integral part of the Canadian nation, and together with it, also the gold, the copper, and the oil hidden in its subsoil. The 1950s marked, in this sense, the beginning of a convulsive process, through which the North of the country started to be increasingly understood, represented and performed as a territorial entity to control.

If such attempts might not seem very different from those of the early colonial experiences, unlikely from the past, extractive endeavors were now carried out and promoted as part of a "bigger picture", in other words, of a larger government plan meant to holistically manage social, political and economic life in the North. The growing human and technological presence, and the continuous efforts to integrate Northern populations and livelihoods into the wage economy should thus be seen as part of this specific plan aimed at making the North a more and more homogenous space, not only by *extending* to this region services, institutions and lifestyles typical of the South, but by stressing its fundamental *belonging* to the Canadian nation. Therefore, if John Diefenbaker's 'Roads to Resources' (1957-1963) envisioned a specific mobility of people, mindsets and technologies from South to North, I would argue that, once this process was set into motion, the frontier, although not entirely missing its fluid and versatile essence, was now increasingly object of attempts to fix it and normalize it. As the energy frontier of a developing petro-nation, the far, remote and mythical North was, more than ever before,

imagined as a *Canadian* North, with the consequence of a widespread feeling of shared entitlement to its resources.

As a result, the progressive incorporation of Native populations into the industrial economy became not only a way to address the long-standing social issues affecting Northern aboriginal communities, but also to silence possible claims and oppositions, by stressing belonging, unity and homogeneity.

A turning point: the 1970s and the new resource boom

In 1966, the Glassco Commission recommended the transformation of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (DNANR) into what became the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). Not much differently from its predecessor, the newly established Department immediately manifested its intentions to make Northern development coincide with resource exploitation, by placing the construction of a pipeline at the center of its agenda. Although we will need to wait until the early 1970s for the first Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proposals, in the mid-1960s, the winds of change had already started to blow through the North, and a hidden, yet growing discontent was paving its way among northern communities. The reasons behind this unrest were multiple, including a general dissatisfaction for the conditions imposed by the Indian Act[59] (1876) and the feeling of having for too long been subject to internal and external pressures (either by the federal government or the United States). In order to voice their dissatisfaction, between 1968 and 1973, approximately all Northern aboriginal people gathered in organizations for political self-representation, such as the Committee on Original Peoples Entitlement (COPE), the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) and the National Indian Brotherhood (what later became the Assembly of First Nations). At the same time, similar organizations started to be established in other parts of the world, including United States, Scandinavia, South America and Australia. As native claims were being progressively upscaled, the so-called 'indigenous movement' was born (Dahl, 2012; Gray, 1997; Niezen, 2003).

[59] The Indian Act is the primary document which governs a wide range of matters including Indian status, bands and reserves. The Indian Act has undergone various amendments, most notably in 1951 and 1985. Since it authorizes the government to regulate several aspects of Indian lives, it has been considered a highly paternalistic and invasive law, aimed at the assimilation of aboriginal people into the non-Indigenous society.

In this context of political uprising among indigenous communities, the first plans of building a pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley (NWT) were made public in Canada. Northern aboriginal people saw this situation as the long-waited opportunity to voice their discontent towards government and industry plans, and to finally claim their right to self-determination. Although a more thorough analysis of indigenous participation in the MVP will be contained in Chapters 6 and 7, it is nevertheless worth to stress that this infrastructure project has deeply affected the course of aboriginal politics in the North over the last decades. If, as we have seen so far, there has been, historically, a tight entanglement between Northern populations and processes of resource exploitation, I definitely agree with the Jessica Shadian (2014, p. 93), according to whom, 'it was the proposal for a pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley that placed Canada's aboriginal peoples at the centre of Canadian resource politics'.

The mobilization against the construction of the MVP led to some fundamental changes in Canada's legal and institutional landscape. Throughout the 1970s, a long series of court actions revolutionized Canadian jurisprudence in terms of land rights[60], and starting from 1973, twenty-six comprehensive land-claim agreements have been signed between aboriginal groups and the federal government. Although the negotiations for self-government and for the settlement of regional claims represent some extremely successful achievements for Canadian aboriginal groups, I believe it is essential not to detach such accomplishments from the circumstances which, although not solely, massively contributed to their fulfilling.

From the end of the 1960s, the North was in fact invested by a new resource rush, initially triggered by discoveries of oil in Prudhoe Bay (Alaska), and further accelerated by the unbalances and subsequent crises of the global oil market. With huge expectations on the hydrocarbon potential of Northern territories being fueled and specific visions of the future being shaped, the Northwest energy frontier was gaining a new *momentum* as a deeply contested site of negotiation. Differently from the past, as the plans for the MVP unfolded, and so the massive

[60] In this regard, it is worth to mention the *Calder Decision* of 1973, which reviewed the existence of aboriginal title in Canadian law and triggered the negotiation of modern treaties by the Federal Government; Section 35 of Canadian Constitution, introduced in 1982, where aboriginal and treaty rights are explicitly recognized and provided constitutional protection; the *R v Sparrow* Decision of 1990, where the Supreme Court regulated the infringement of aboriginal rights according to specific criteria and, in direct connection with the latter, the *R. v. Van der Peet* decision of 1996, where the Supreme Court further defined and restricted what constitutes aboriginal rights; and *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* in 1997, the most comprehensive decision about Aboriginal title.
For more detailed information on Canadian aboriginal law and precedent-setting court cases, I recommend Kulchyski, P. (1994), *Unjust Relations: Aboriginal Rights in Canadian Courts* and Havemann, P. (1999), *Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.*

mobilization against the pipeline's construction, the frontier was shifting form once again: no longer (or at least not uniquely) expression of a single idea of development or merely a reflection of the ambitions of a restricted group of (Southern) actors, but meeting point of multiple identities, interests and narratives - both aboriginal and non-aboriginal ones - suddenly coming (and clashing) together. Now, with a thousand miles-long pipeline virtually re-designing its contours, the Northwest energy frontier was being challenged and reconstructed *from the inside.*

At the same time, while the intense mobilization against the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline might lead to think that the 'energy frontier' - as a predominantly Southern-shaped spatial imaginary and project - has been progressively disappearing from the physical and mental geographic imaginary of Canadian North[61], I tend to be more cautious in this regard.

> The "one warm line" we will draw across the North is the unmistakable boundary of Canada's sovereign territory. So it will be clear to all other nations where our rightful claim to the Arctic - including its resources and sea lanes - begins and ends. But our vision is also about fulfilling the immense promise of the North (Harper, 2006b).

As pointed out before, the frontier is indeed an extremely elusive and yet captivating concept, which has somehow managed to exercise a long-standing effect on different actors' hopes, expectations and ambitions. While the frontier has been often understood as the "one warm line", as Stephen Harper calls it in the extract abovementioned, I have stressed at the beginning of this chapter that this view might also be considered rather narrow, and neglecting the perspectives of those living on other side, i.e. the "frontierized". For them, once the frontier has been produced, either through the narrative power of a map or through the introduction of an official border, it becomes an entity not only to *cope*, but to constantly *engage* with, through a multiplicity of practices, performances and negotiations. In this sense, I suggest that, in the years following the first MVP proposals, the Northwest energy frontier has far from disappeared. Rather, it has been

[61] In the years of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline negotiations, and especially during the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, the frontier narrative has in fact been directly placed in opposition with a 'homeland narrative' (Berger, 1977), which, by acknowledging indigenous perspectives, was perceived by many as much more inclusive and legitimate.

internally re-worked, loaded with new meanings and perspectives, becoming a sticky and elusive site of promise for both indigenous and non-indigenous actors.

5.4. Conclusions: frontiers of complexity

From the 1970s, the Northwest of Canada, and especially the area of the Mackenzie Valley (NWT), has experienced a new resurgence of hydrocarbon exploration. The northwest 'energy frontier' has, as a result, been opened to a variety of actors - both proximate to and far from the proposed extractive facilities - who have contributed to both expanding and reconfiguring the frontier's contours. With the international attention and recognition achieved by the aboriginal groups inhabiting the area - many of whom have stressed their belonging to an emerging transnational indigenous movement (Niezen, 2003) - new actors, interests and perspectives have been encountering in the North.

For this reason, I argue for the importance of locating the production of frontiers in what Michel Foucault (1978b, p. 98) calls 'the field of multiple and mobile power relations'; in other words, for the importance of recognizing the diversity and complexity of the spatial strategies which are employed - at different geographical and political scales - by both indigenous and non-indigenous actors. Although rather concise and in no way comprehensive, what my historical overview of Northern aboriginal people's participation in hydrocarbon development has attempted to show is that, while Southern oil entrepreneurs and federal map-makers were busy projecting their extractive ambitions in the North, and depicting it as an empty land of wilderness ready to be filled in with opportunities and "purpose", this land has indeed never been empty. Northern aboriginal groups have always been there, encountering the (federal or corporate) Other, entering agreements, and trying to cope with a rapidly changing reality.

From the 1970s, Dene and Inuit communities have started to challenge Southern perceptions of the North and related exclusionary practices, by increasingly claiming decision-making rights and more self-representative tropes. In this context, as I am going to illustrate in the next two chapters, the MVP negotiations emerge as a uniquely informative setting, where indigenous participants, through their understandings of space and time, actively reconfigure power relations. In response to the petro-nationalist project of shaping a homogeneous, stable and governable national collectivity, in the years of the MVP, Northern aboriginal people have

simultaneously promoted non-state perspectives of nationhood and sovereignty (Coulthard, 2014), and, at the same time, become co-producers of the various geopolitical and cultural reconfigurations of the North (through, for example, the signing of land-claim agreements). The spatial result of these multiple interventions, as I suggest here, is still a frontier, but what I would call a *frontier of complexity*, i.e. a messy, liminal and multi-layered spatiality, differently articulated, enacted and experienced by the differently positioned actors of Northern energy development.

While the Northwest energy frontier (as any frontier) can be regarded as a space which moves, evolves and disappears, this might not necessarily be the case. As I have further elaborated on in my article *The Spatiality of Hope - Mapping Canada's Northwest Energy Frontier* (Guerrieri, 2018), frontiers are 'sticky' (Ahmed, 2010) in the sense that they "trap" people into a deeply expansionist and hopeful thinking, which is internalised and normalize as common sense. This is true also with regard to the frontierized - i.e. those living across or on the other side of the frontier line - who, quoting what Meehan and Plonski (2017, p. 20) write about borderland populations, 'start see [each other and the world in general] through the lens of their now different citizenship, notions of nationalism, spatial and political hierarchies, and rights and privileges (or lack thereof)'.

Drawing upon these considerations, in the next two chapters, I am going to show how, while during the Berger Inquiry (Chapter 6), static understandings of the North were challenged by Dene evocative story-telling combining a variety of memories and imaginations, at the JRP hearings (Chapter 7), the participants' spatial and temporal narratives seem to have been suddenly restricted. Urged to fit into the new bureaucratic space partially resulting from the land-claim agreements, the frontierized face now the consequences and the challenges of their new subject position: not only *frontier* people, but *pipeline* people.

Chapter 6. Land, nation and the indigenous space. Voices from the Berger Inquiry (1974-1977).

6.1. Background: the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry ("Berger Inquiry")

After the petroleum discovery at Prudhoe Bay in Alaska (1968), oil and gas explorations started to intensify throughout the North, leading to a major interest in the vast reserves of the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea. At the same time, multiple issues in terms of Canadian Arctic sovereignty emerged when, a year after Prudhoe Bay, a United States submarine - the SS Manhattan - transited the Northwest Passage from east to west without having previously informed Canadian authorities. In spite of the increased tension in the international relations between the two countries, it was not until the oil shock of 1973 and the subsequent spike in global energy prices that the idea of a gas route through the Canadian North was concretely taken into consideration. This situation led quickly to the first proposals to build a pipeline across the Mackenzie Valley, an area for the majority occupied by the traditional territories of Inuit, First Nations and Métis communities. In March 1974, Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline Ltd. (CAGPL), a consortium of twenty-seven US and Canadian oil producers - including Exxon, Shell, Gulf and TransCanada Pipelines - advanced a formal plan to build a natural gas pipeline that would start in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, run across Northern Yukon and the Mackenzie Valley, and terminate in Northern Alberta. Few months later, Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd., a consortium of Alberta and British Columbia companies (Alberta Gas Trunk Line and Westcoast Transmission) proposed an alternative route, called the "Maple Leaf" due to its extension solely within Canadian borders, which would carry natural gas from the Mackenzie Delta to Alberta.

After the two proposals, the Government of Canada established a Royal Commission of Inquiry, in order to assess the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the project. Head of the Commission was appointed Thomas R. Berger, an indigenous rights lawyer and Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Between 1974 and 1977, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry collected testimonies throughout Canada, following three main formats: (a) preliminary hearings (1974), (b) formal hearings (1975-1976), where experts such as scientists, economists, representatives of the oil companies were interviewed, and (c) community hearings (1975-1976), which were held in 35 communities along the Mackenzie Valley and

which directly involved Northern aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents. The Inquiry received huge media coverage from Canadian radio and television broadcasting (especially CBC[62]) as well as from local and national newspapers. After producing over 40,000 pages of transcripts and evidences comprised in over 280 volumes, the Inquiry's work came to a conclusion in May 1977 with the publication of the final report *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland* by Thomas Berger. In the Report, Berger recommended the federal government to place a 10-year moratorium on the building of the pipeline in order to allow for the settlement of aboriginal land claims.

Over the years, several authors have emphasized, in their studies, the significance of the Berger Inquiry, and have illustrated its long-lasting impacts on Northern imaginaries, consultation models and indigenous participation in development projects (Abele, 2014; Coulthard, 2014; Goudge, 2016; Lambrecht, 2013; Nuttall, 2010a). While undoubtedly inspired by these studies, rather than exploring the effects of the Inquiry, which I will address in the following chapter, I am here interested in unraveling the importance of the community hearings as a unique space of appearance and negotiation, where indigenous claims are strategically articulated through storytelling (Cruikshank, 2000; McCall, 2011). For the purposes of my analysis, I will thus be looking at how *space-time* (or 'spatiality') is understood, constructed and performed by indigenous participants, and how this process is embedded in a complex of power relations.

In order to do so, I have selected those testimonies, which I have found particularly significant for their ability to illustrate not only how indigenous peoples creatively engage with issues of space and time, but also how they resist and/or challenge possible static, western-oriented and simplistic assumptions in this regard. As already explained in the Introduction and as the list[63] below will reveal, the testimonies I have chosen to include in this analysis are mostly of Dene witnesses[64], and just in very few cases of random or "secondary" participants. Rather, those talking here are passionate, charismatic and educated young leaders or chiefs who are very

[62] In this regard, the digital archives of CBC have a large collection of videos available at: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/the-berger-pipeline-inquiry.Also, the book *Stories Told* by Patrick Scott documents many of the testimonies presented at the Berger Inquiry. Scott was sent as cameraman by CBC North to follow the Inquiry, and the book is his very detailed and emotional account of this journey.
[63] The list does not include Dene witnesses Philip Blake and Robert Andre, due to a lack of information regarding their involvement in the political life of the NWT and in the following stages of the project after the Berger Inquiry.
[64] Specifically, Sahtu, Gwich'in and Dehcho.

much aware of the pivotal moment they are living, and who - in many of the cases - will, in the following years, '[take] on the mantel of leadership for their peoples and subsequently for the NWT itself' (Goudge, 2016, p. 405).

Frank T'Seleie, Fort Good Hope

At the time of the Inquiry, Frank T'Seleie was the youngest, university-educated Dene chief of Fort Good Hope. His testimony, where he bluntly confronts Bob Blair from Foothills, is without doubt one of the most articulated and straightforward of the whole Inquiry. After spending few years in the South, he returned to the North in 2002 again as a chief at Fort Good Hope. This time, however, he became a strong advocate of the Mackenzie Gas Project.

George Barnaby, Fort Good Hope

When Berger came to Fort Good Hope, George Barnaby was another young member of the Sahtu Dene community who started his political activism during the Inquiry and has since remained involved in local politics (McCall, 2011, p. 53). In 1975, he was elected in the NWT Legislature from which he resigned one year later, in sign of protest for the lack of interest by the NWT towards Dene issues. He has been part of the Indian Brotherhood, the Sahtu Tribal Council and the Fort Good Hope Community Council and has, over the years, worked on the Resource Development Program and the Dene land-claims. He is currently member of the Sahtu Land and Water Board, one of the main regulatory boards for land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley.

Stephen Kakfwi, Fort Good Hope

After a youth spent in several residential schools, Stephen Kakfwi started to be engaged in politics during the Berger Inquiry. He headed the Dene Nation as its National Chief for several years from 1983 and later left it in 1987, when he was elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the NWT in the constituency of Sahtu. He spent sixteen years in the Assembly, during which he also got the role of cabinet minister in the Territorial Government and of Premier of the NWT from 2000 to 2003. After leaving office, he continued to be involved in the development of the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline, this time as a supporter, becoming part of the negotiating team for the Sahtu communities. In 2005, his proposal to charge property taxes and a gas surcharge on the pipeline met resistance and he was removed from his position. He has been

recently appointed to the Supreme Court Advisory Board by current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Richard Nerysoo, Fort McPherson

In the years following the Inquiry, Richard Nerysoo remained very actively involved in the political life of the North. Few years after his testimony in front of Berger, he was elected as a member of the NWT Legislature. In 1984, he became the youngest premier of the NWT and the first indigenous person to be holding the position. Through the 1990s, he got leadership roles in organizations such as the Gwich'in Council International and Gwich'in Tribal Council. In 2000, he contributed to the foundation of the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, which became one of the major stakeholders in the construction of the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline.

Georges Erasmus, Behchokǫ̀ (formerly Rae/Edzo)

Georges Henry Erasmus has been, over the last fifty years, an extremely important figure for Northern aboriginal politics. At 28, he was one of the most influential young leaders in the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT, later transformed into the Dene Nation. Increasingly dissatisfied over the lack of agreement within members of the Dene Nation, he stepped down as their leader, and in 1985, became the youngest national chief of the Assembly of the First Nations, a political organization founded in 1982 to represent the interests of the First Nations in Canada. Erasmus has proven to be an incredibly talented leader and has represented indigenous communities in several important occasions, from the negotiations in the "Oka Crisis" to the work in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples or again, within the negotiations in favor of the Dehcho First Nations's land claim and self-government agreements.

Paul Andrew, Tulita (former Fort Norman)

Paul Andrew became Chief of Tulita at 22, one year before the launch of the Berger Inquiry. Besides holding positions within the Dene Nation in the Sahtu Region, he has also worked for over thirty years as radio and television broadcaster at CBC. In 2008, he won a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for media and communications. More recently, in 2017, he was awarded the Order of the NWT, the highest honor awarded to NWT residents.

Fred Rabisca, Fort Good Hope

Member of the Fort Good Hope's band council at the time of the Inquiry, in the following years he remained in Fort Good Hope where he held the position of band's senior administrative officer.

6.2. Constructing an analytical framework

Spatiality/Space-time as analytical category

Drawing upon Doreen Massey's relational geography (1994), I am going to approach the hearings by adopting 'spatiality' or, using Massey's terminology, 'space-time' (2001) as my main analytical category. Inspired by the Massey's wish to overcome exclusionary and potentially constraining dualisms, I am interested in exploring how, in the context of the pipeline community hearings, aboriginal participants understand spatiality, and how this understanding reflects or contributes to shaping a complex set of power relations. Through the analysis of a selection of Dene testimonies, I will look at the production of three concepts, which share a fundamental spatio-temporal dimension, and which will constitute my main analytical focus, namely a) the land, b) the nation, and c) the indigenous space. Far from taking these as fixed and immutable entities, I am interested in investigating how these different spatialities are discursively produced by the participants at the hearings, and how they are continuously evoking multiple and interlocking temporalities. Past, present and future are in fact often overlapping in the testimonies and built as both separate moments and as a continuum linking together memory, experience and imagination. As I intend to show, although the complex geographies that materialize through the testimonies are often configured in rigid and dichotomous terms (e.g. 'Our Nation' vs. 'Your Nation'), a closer focus potentially reveals a much deeper hybridity of meanings and perspectives. The same hybridity is also reflected, and perhaps made even more evident, in the way some of the participants intertwine multiple temporal scales, which they inhabit and skillfully navigate by means of their evocative story-telling.

Combining Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory

The approach I use in the analysis of the hearings has been inspired by Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA). While undoubtedly recognizing the validity of Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA, as already explained in Chapter 2, I might not always adhere

to Fairclough's systematic approach, which I prefer to regard as a guide and source of inspiration, rather than a strict set of rules to follow. In this sense, following similar efforts undertaken by other scholars (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Rear and Jones, 2013), including Fairclough himself (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), I intend to borrow some conceptual tools from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory - e.g. *nodal points*, *floating signifiers*, *discursive struggle* - and, in the last part of this chapter, attempt an operationalization of their approach. The value of this analytical step lies in its ability to reveal how competing discourses emerge through the appropriation of specific concepts, which, although "empty" in themselves, are infused by the participants at the hearings with particular meanings in order to be mobilized strategically.

6.3. Land

Frank T'Seleie

When the Inquiry arrived at Fort Good Hope, Dene Chief Frank T'Seleie delivered a very popular speech, in which he directly confronted Robert Blair, the president of Calgary's Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd., one of the main proposers of the pipeline.

> Somehow in your carpeted boardrooms, in your panelled office, you [Mr Blair] are plotting to take away from me the very centre of my existence. You are stealing my soul. Deep in the glass and concrete of your world you are stealing my soul, my spirit. By scheming to torture my land, you are torturing me. By plotting to invade my land, you are invading me. If you ever dig a trench through my land, you are cutting through me.
> - Frank T'Seleie (Fort Good Hope)[65]

Starting from the first step of Fairclough's analytical framework, namely 'vocabulary' (1989, p.110), it is possible to identify a series of rhetorical devices, such as repetitions and analogies ('by scheming to torture my land, you are torturing me', 'by plotting to invade my land, you are invading me'), which directly contribute not only to making the identification of the Dene with their land extremely vivid, but also deeply 'embodied' (Radcliffe, 2018).

According to Fairclough, words have experiential value (1989, p.112-116), i.e. they reflect the knowledge and belief of the speaker. In this sense, the word 'land' is here associated

[65] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18, 1776, 20-27.

with other terms such as ‘existence’, ‘soul’, ‘spirit’ and ‘me’ (which all emerge as synonyms of ‘land’), and is thus configured as an integral part of Dene well-being. The use of the personal pronoun ‘You’ (in its subjective form) counterposed to ‘me’ (in its objective form) suggests not only an opposition between two worldviews (i.e. Dene and non-Dene), but, more specifically, a power gap between a “corporate you”, active subject of all sentences, and an “indigenous me”, passive victim of external action. However, such interchange of active and passive form should not be mistaken for a submissive acceptance of the existing power unbalances. Instead, it can be interpreted as a direct accusation and subsequent attribution of responsibility - rather than of power - from the legitimate owner of the land (the Dene) to the external invader (Robert Blair and the pipeline company). In this sense, the fact that, in the extract, Robert Blair has an active role only when it comes to the destruction of the land/soul might hint at a specific intention from the speaker to re-align power relations in favor of the indigenous counterpart. Therefore, in this discursive production, the land does not emerge only as an object of controversy, but more importantly, as an argument.

I am going to attempt to clarify this point by reporting the extracts from four more Dene testimonies:

> I was born in the bush and was raised in the bush and in town. I lived in the bush most of the time. I was taught how to snare rabbits and to set traps by my mother. I was taught to live in the bush and also to live off the land. (…) When I was in school with the rest we were forced to learn in the white man's system. We had to learn whatever was taught to us. We didn't learn a thing about our traditional life. We weren't given the ability or rights to say what we wanted to learn (...) To this day I can never use what I was taught in school to live in the bush.
> - Fred Rabisca (Fort Good Hope)[66]

> It is an important and special thing to be an Indian (…) It means living with the land, with the animals, birds and fish. It means saying the land is an old friend and an old friend that your father knew, your grandfather knew, indeed your people have always known (…) To the Indian people our land really is our life. Without our land we cannot or we could no longer exist as people.

[66] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18, 1785, 21-26; 1786, 8-13, 16-17.

- Richard Nerysoo (Fort McPherson)[67]

> We would like to regain control of our land and our lives before we even discuss development like the proposed pipeline. We cannot allow any development on our land when we have no control of it. (…) We have been the owners of this land before the white man came and formed Canada, but because we never wrote our views and values of this land down on paper before, the Government seems to think we never thought that way before. (…) Our land is the grave for all our generations past. It is also the life of my people now, and the life of all our generations to come.
> - Stephen Kakfwi (Fort Good Hope)[68]

> I was born in the bush bush, along the Keele River in the year of 1951. And I from then I still got some very fond memories of living out in the bush, living on the land.
> - Paul Andrew (Brackett Lake)[69]

The four extracts abovementioned are taken from the testimonies presented by Fred Rabisca and Stephen Kakfwi in Fort Good Hope, Richard Nerysoo in Fort McPherson and Paul Andrew in Brackett Lake. In the next section, I am going to analyze their statements, and point out how, by referring to life *off*, *with* and *on* the land, these can be regarded as particularly emblematic of how different understandings of the land are produced and evoked within the context of the hearings.

Fred Rabisca

In the extract of his testimony, Fred Rabisca, one of the young people participating at the Berger Inquiry, makes use of storytelling to demonstrate aboriginal people's profound reliance on the land. Rabisca re-evokes the memory of hunting and trapping rabbits, an activity that he was taught as a child by his mother and which he has presumably continued to carry out in the present. Looking at the vocabulary employed in the speech, it is possible to identify two sets of words and associated spatialities which are constructed in opposition with each other. The 'mother', the 'bush' and the 'land' are all presented as sources of knowledge and practical skills,

[67] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 10 July 1975, Vol. 13, 1178, 19-20, 22-27; 1179, 3-5.
[68] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 6 August 1975, Vol. 19, 1838, 2-6; 1842, 1-5; 1844, 11-14.
[69] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 26 June 1975, Vol. 10, 867, 7-10.

namely as part of what Tim Ingold (2002) calls 'enskilment', i.e. the 'embodiment of capacities of awareness and response by environmentally situated agents' (p. 5). Each of these elements is, in this sense, endowed with a fundamental instrumental value for Rabisca's well-being. The spatial significance of the 'land' and the 'bush' is reinforced later in the testimony, where a comparison is established with a second group of concurrent words (and spatialities). The 'town' and the 'school' are considered symbols of the 'white man's system' of oppression, and, by being directly counterposed to the bush and the land, they are presented as sources of a static and worthless knowledge ('We didn't learn a thing about our traditional life'). If the land, the mother and the bush contributed to Rabisca's 'enskilment', the school and the town are configured as two "colonizing" spatialities, which foster a process of 'deskilment' (Nuttall, 2000) in the speaker, and detach him from his community.

The grammar level further reinforces this opposition. In the first part of the speech, we can notice an interchange between passive ('I was taught') and active form ('I was born', 'I lived'). The first, combined with the juxtaposition of the two sentences 'I was taught how to snare rabbits and set traps' and 'I was taught how to live', is used to highlight the importance of the learning experience, which emerges as playing a fundamental role in the speaker's personal growth and becoming. In the second part of the speech, however, the same passive form ('we were forced') together with an increasing use of negative clauses ('we didn't learn', 'we weren't given') is employed to emphasize the feelings of frustration, oppression and confusion shared not only by the protagonist, but by a wider collectivity - as it is hinted by the shift from the singular personal pronoun 'I' to the plural 'we'. This shift is particularly significant here because it contributes to *scaling up* Rabisca's experience, and imbuing it with a much more profound meaning: what happened to him should be seen as expression of a colonial violence deeply rooted in and enforced through federal institutions.

Taking into consideration the discursive opposition materializing in the speech and the two sets of spatialities through which this opposition is presented, I will attempt an interpretation of what kind of understanding of the land is the one emerging from the expression 'to live off the land'. While Rabisca only quotes the land once in the extract abovementioned, I suggest that he is actively engaging in an act of *meaning-making*. By linking the land to the teachings received by

his mother and to daily practices of hunting and trapping, the land is constructed as a concrete and absolutely vital source of not only personal, but intergenerational sustenance. When he openly refuses the official knowledge circulated in the school, he is essentially denouncing the inability of the latter to provide that kind of information and practical tools which have, until then, guaranteed Dene survival ('to this day I can never use what I was taught in school to live in the bush'). Through Fred Rabisca's words, then, the land is configured as a space of practical knowledge, of experiences and memories which all contribute to safeguarding both his and his community's material well-being across generations.

Richard Nerysoo

The second extract is taken from the testimony of young Gwich'in leader Richard Nerysoo. Considering that, during more recent testimonies, the term *Indian* started to be dismissed in favor of the more self-representative *Dene*, Nerysoo's intervention can be placed within the beginning of this important transition. Looking at the vocabulary used in the extract, 'land' emerges here as a keyword, to which other terms such as 'friend', 'life' and 'Indian' - or rather, 'to be an Indian', here nominalized and transformed from verb into noun/subject - are connected.

The predominance of the 'land' in Nerysoo's speech is made even more evident at the grammar level of the text. Starting from the dimension of *transitivity*, a central concept that Norman Fairclough borrows from Halliday and Matthiessen's functional grammar[70], I have noticed a recurrence of what both Halliday (p. 213-220) and Fairclough (1989, pp. 120-123) call 'relational' and 'existential' processes ('to be an Indian…means living with the land', 'our land really is our life', 'exist as people'). The presence of these two processes together contributes to endowing the land with a fundamental character of certainty and actuality (i.e. the land is as real

[70] In their *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday and Matthiessen (2013, p. 101) explain 'transitivity' as it follows: 'transitivity specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed'. A process consists potentially of three elements: 1) the process itself; 2) the participants in the process, and 3) the circumstances associated with the process. The main kinds of processes are: *material processes* (types of doing: actor + goal); *verbal processes* (saying: sayer + what is said + receiver); *mental processes* (sensing: senser + phenomenon); *relational processes* (types of being: relating two terms in different ways such as with being or having); *behavioral processes* (types of behaving, such as physiological or psychological) ; *existential processes* (phenomena that exist or happen). As highlighted by Fairclough (1989), the presence of each process suggests different levels of agency by the participants (ex. a higher degree of agency in the material process compared to the mental one).

and present as the people inhabiting it). Similarly, the use of two kinds of *expressive modality*[71] (Fairclough, 1989, p. 127) in the sentence 'without our land we cannot or we could no longer exist as people' vividly evokes the risk of both a present and a future where the deprivation of the land is traumatically experienced as the deprivation of life.

What kind spatiality is then the one materializing through Richard Nerysoo's testimony when he talks about the land? And how is it different from the 'land' previously narrated by Fred Rabisca? In his account of what it means to be an Indian, Nerysoo identifies 'living with the land' as an essential requirement. The use of the preposition 'with' followed by 'the land' as its reference effectively expresses the sense of connection between the Dene and their ancestral land. Rather than a physical entity separated from all the rest, the land is an integral part of Dene lives, as established by a cosmology (Andrews et al., 1998; Brody, 1981; Sharp, 2001) which considers all living creatures such as 'the animals, birds and fish' in a fundamental relationship of interrelation and interdependence. Through the expression 'to live *with* the land', the land is elevated in its status and becomes a companion to treat as peer, rather than merely a source of sustenance (as in Rabisca's testimony). In this sense, by being referred to as 'an old friend', the land is also brought into a discursive field of morality (Dokis, 2015, pp. 66-72), care and trust which regards spiritual bonds with the land as equally important for Dene existence as their physical complements. Eventually, as already occurring in the speeches of Frank T'Seleie and Fred Rabisca, the land emerges not only as a primary source of self-identification ('our land really is our life'), but as a basic condition to ensure both the material and cultural survival of the Dene collectivity ('without our land we cannot or we could no longer exist as people').

Stephen Kakfwi and Paul Andrew

In the two final extracts, Stephen Kakfwi from Fort Good Hope and the former chief of Brackett Lake Paul Andrew introduce a further conceptualization of the land which somehow manages to both differ from and to integrate the previous two.

[71] Fairclough defines expressive modality as 'the modality of the speaker's/writer's evaluation of truth'. Modality is usually expressed by modal auxiliaries such as 'may, might, must, should, can, can't, ought'.

Drawing again upon Fairclough's framework of textual analysis, in this selection from Kakfwi's testimony, I have identified two groups of words whose connotation can be seen as directly dependent on the keyword 'land'. In the first group, 'land' is connected with terms such as 'development', 'allow', 'control' and 'owners', while in the second, it is matched with other terms such as 'grave' and 'life'. The first group of words contributes to constructing the 'land' as a territorial entity, a very physical - and not only spiritual and cultural - space which can indeed be legitimately occupied and owned. A transitivity analysis of the text from the extract supports these observations and provides also some more details on the role of the Dene in this *space-making* and, simultaneously, *space-claiming* process.

Looking in fact at the use of verbs associated to the main participant, namely the Dene (the recurrent 'we' of the text), we can notice a predominance of material processes ('regain', 'allow'), coupled with few relational ('we have been the owners') and verbal ones ('discuss'). What these types of processes, together with the exclusive choice of the active form throughout the whole extract, might be pointing out is a wish to promote the idea of an "agent we", i.e. the Dene, whose will and consent will have to be considered for any decision to be taken on the(ir) land. At the same time, while such verbal constructions are aimed at reversing existing hierarchies of power in favor of aboriginal people, the modal auxiliary 'would' placed at the beginning of the extract ('we would like to regain control of our land') seems to reveal a latent degree of uncertainty and caution regarding the concrete possibility of finally achieving land rights.

Moving to the second lexical group, as I have previously mentioned, this is comprised of two terms which contribute to imbue the land with a powerfully ambivalent character, namely 'grave' and 'life'. Quite interestingly, in fact, in the second part of Kakfwi's speech, the land is no longer, or at least not only, addressed through its material or territorial dimensions. Once again, as already observed in Richard Nerysoo's testimony, the land emerges instead as one moment in an extremely fluid and constantly changing articulation of practices, memories and relations (Massey, 1994); in other words, as an expression of both present being and constant becoming. Through these final lines, the intrinsic and unique value of the land is expressed in its ability to encapsulate life and death, to exist beyond time and space, and yet, to be perceived and experienced as extremely present in both.

Discussion: to live on the land

Through a selection of hearings, I have attempted to explore how the spatiality of the 'land' is constructed by Dene participants during the Berger Inquiry. Specifically, I have built my analysis around four extracts where 'land' is introduced by three prepositions: 'off', 'with' and 'on'. While 'off' and 'with' evoke two different, yet interrelated understandings of the land - respectively, as a source of sustenance and physical well-being ('off') and as a source of knowledge and spiritual well-being ('with') - 'on' can be seen as integrating both previous ones, and simultaneously recalling notions of embodiment, historical occupation, and physical as well as cultural survival. It results that, through the utterance 'on the land', a particular "spatialisation" is set into motion, where the land is configured as much more than (and yet, also) a material entity and pivotal element of Dene cosmology, and rather, as a deeply *relational* concept, entangled into a complex set of (power) relations. In this regard, Glen Coulthard, Dene scholar and activist, in his most famous book *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014, pp. 60-61), writes:

> It is a profound misunderstanding to think of the land or place as simply some material object of profound importance to indigenous cultures (although it is this too); instead it ought to be understood as a field of "relationships of things to each other". Place [or land] is a way of knowing, experiencing, and relating with the world - and these ways of knowing often guide forms of resistance to power relations that threaten to erase or destroy our senses of place. This, I argue, is precisely the understanding of land that grounded our critique of colonialism and capitalism in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Therefore, I argue that, in the Berger Inquiry, the land emerges not only as deeply spatial concept, but as a political statement in itself. In this perspective, the expression 'on the land' can be seen as creating a powerful causal link in the sense that it simultaneously constructs the land as (1) an essential source of sustenance, of knowledge, of material and spiritual well-being for indigenous peoples, and, *because* of this, (2) as something which can indeed be legitimately owned. Kakfwi's testimony, in particular, asserts Dene's role as legitimate owners of the land,

and as decision-makers and right-holders, where the latter entails the right to allow (or not allow) any kind of development on the land.

In conclusion, what I have attempted to show through this analysis is that the perspectives, the memories, and the meanings which the 'land' is imbued with are much more diverse and unfixed than one might think. Although it is undoubted that the different Dene participants at the Inquiry did indeed share common thoughts regarding the significance of their ancestral land, the alternation (and sometimes overlap) of the prepositions off/with/on suggests a multiplicity of views, practices and stories, which all have an essential role in making the land a source, as well as a site, of power and heterogeneity. What the discourse analysis of the selected testimonies has thus contributed to illustrating is that the land should not be seen as an already given spatiality, but, rather, as one which is under continuous negotiation, and relationally produced through personal and collective histories, experiences and practices.

6.4. Nation

On 19 July, 1975, just few months after Judge Thomas Berger had officially inaugurated the community hearings in Aklavik, more than 300 delegates from *Denendeh*[72] communities, who had gathered in Fort Simpson (NWT) for the Joint General Assembly of the Indian Brotherhood of NWT and the Métis Association of NWT, approved a fundamental document called the 'Dene Declaration'. One of the statements contained in the very first lines of the Declaration (quoted in Watkins, 1977, p.3) reported: 'We the Dene of the Northwest Territories insist on the right to be regarded by ourselves and the world as a nation'.

Starting from these premises, I am going to analyze how the (Dene) nation is conceptualized in the Berger Inquiry, by analyzing the extracts from the testimonies of Stephen Kakfwi, Frank T'Seleie and Philip Blake.

> The Federal Government sees only potential oil and gas reserves. They see only isolated communities marked "high impact" on their maps - communities that may have to be wiped out

[72] *Denendeh* is a Dene word *meaning* "Land of the People" and "here". According to the Dene, Denendeh coincides with the Northwest Territories, although its specific geographic extension is ultimately unclear.

in what they call "the national interest". For them this is reality (…) Our reality is that this is our land, that we are a nation of people and that we want to live our own ways. (…) Our reality is that all of the "help" your nation has sent us has only made us poor, humiliated and confused. (...) Our reality is also that your nation has a lot of trouble understanding that we think and say.
-Stephen Kakfwi (Fort Good Hope)[73]

Philip Blake, in Fort McPherson, told you that if your nation becomes so violent as to force a pipeline through our land, then we love our land and our future enough to blow up the pipeline. He told you that we, the last free Indian nation, are willing to fight so that we may survive as a free nation (...) For our part, Mr. Berger, we are making our own plans for the Dene nation (...) As you know, the Dene people recently held an assembly in Fort Simpson where we declared officially that we are a nation of people, within Canada. For the Dene people, it was nothing very new or different to declare ourselves a nation. We have always seen ourselves in these terms. We have our own land, our own languages, our own political and economic system. We have our own culture and traditions and history, distinct from those of your nation. (…)We are proud of who we are, proud to be Dene, and loyal to our Nation, but we are not saying we do not respect you and your ways.
- Frank T'Seleie (Fort Good Hope)[74]

Your nation has suddenly decided to move in and occupy land that is rightfully ours. Where is your great tradition of justice today? Does your nation's greed for oil and gas suddenly override justice? What exactly is your superior civilization? (…) I strongly believe that we do have something to offer your nation. However, something other than our minerals. I believe it is in the self-interest of your own nation to allow the Indian nation to survive and develop in our own way, on our own land. (…) I believe that your nation might wish to see us, not as a relic from the past, but as a way of life. A system of values by which you may survive in the future. This we are willing to share. If your nation chooses instead to continue to try and destroy our nation, then I hope you will understand why we are willing to fight so that our nation can survive. (…) Can we as an Indian nation keep, help Canada to once again become a true democracy?
-Philip Blake (Fort McPherson)[75]

[73] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 6 August 1975, Vol. 19, 1839, 11-14; 1843, 2-4, 8-10, 18-20
[74] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18, 1769, 28-30; 1770, 1-3; 1771, 12-13; 20-30; 1773, 24-27.
[75] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 9 July 1975, Vol. 12, 1076, 29-30; 1077, 1-4; 1078, 18-23; 1079, 14-21; 1081, 27-28.

Stephen Kakfwi

In the first extract, Stephen Kakfwi accuses the Federal Government of being blinded by its own development plans - the 'potential oil and gas reserves' mentioned in the text - which make it insensitive to the requests and concerns of Northern aboriginal groups. Words such as 'isolated communities', 'high impact', 'maps' and 'national interest' are used to describe the narrow-mindedness of the government apparatus, which categorizes people according to abstract parameters, and thus traps them into fixed subject positions. Furthermore, Kakfwi accuses the Government of Canada of direct interference into Dene affairs, and of being responsible for multiple attempts to fragment the communities - instead of considering them a united entity, i.e. a 'Nation'. The Dene have in fact, according to Kakfwi, become the involuntary recipients of government's 'help', which, in turn, has only contributed to worsening their situation; an argument further reinforced by the triad of adjectives with negative value 'poor, humiliated and confused'. The grammatical choices confirm the fundamental accusatory tone characterizing the whole extract. This is evident first of all in the use of personal pronouns - 'We' vs. 'You' and 'They' - and possessive adjectives - 'Our reality…our land…our own ways'; 'Their maps…Your Nation'.

In Kakfwi's testimony, lexical and grammatical elements work together in order to delineate a dialectic opposition between Dene and non-Dene spatial understandings. In particular, with reference to the concept of 'nation', Kakfwi configures the latter through a simultaneous act of *refusal* and *claiming*. First, he denounces and refuses the constraining and oppressive nature of official government discourse, which conceives the Dene only in terms of impact and isolated communities, and, by reducing their existence to fixed points on a map, attempts to incorporate them for the sake of promoting 'the national interest' or, recalling my previous observations[76], a unified (petro)national space. The nation which the utterance 'your nation' refers to is thus one characterized by an exclusionary and hierarchical understanding of space, which either ignores or tries to flatten diversity, especially if this represents an obstacle to the pursuit of extractive endeavors. Secondly, Kakfwi affirms that there is indeed another nation, as real and meaningful as the Canadian one, but whose status has been constantly diminished and actively threatened by

[76] See Chapter 4.2, (4): Building a Petro-Nation, The Rhetoric of a Petro-National Space.

its counterpart. Although not stating it explicitly in the testimony, for this nation, Kakfwi is claiming the fundamental right to self-determination ('we want to live our own ways').

Frank T'Seleie

Frank T'Seleie's testimony, while having many points of commonality with Stephen Kakfwi's, takes also a step further, and directly engages in an act of *people-making*. In the extract abovementioned, T'Seleie does not in fact project some abstract vision of Dene nationhood, but makes a list of the foundational elements of this concept, namely 'land', 'languages', 'political and economic system', 'culture', 'traditions' and 'history'. All these elements are not only claimed by the members of the nation, but are formulated as their distinctive and shared traits, which bring them together and distinguish them from the members of other nations (including Canada).

Through the lens of CDA, T'Seleie's testimony proves to be an extremely valuable source of information both from a textual and discursive level of analysis. Regarding the first, the extract is characterized by a recurrent use of verbs in their active form and by a predominance of material processes ('we are willing to fight', 'we are making our own plans'), followed by verbal ('we declared') and relational ones ('we have our own land…', 'we are proud of who we are'). These grammatical choices make the Dene emerge as the key participant in the communication event, and provide them with a high degree of agency and credibility in the eyes of their interlocutors. Through the words of T'Seleie, who here takes on the role of spokesperson, the Dene are presented as the ones in charge not only of the *spatial* configuration of the nation ('we declared officially that we are *a nation of people, within Canada'*), but also of the *temporal* one ('we have *always* seen ourselves in these terms'). While T'Seleie states that only 'recently' the Dene have constituted themselves into a nation, he also maintains that, in reality, this was 'nothing very new or different', thus simultaneously endowing this spatiality with both the characteristics of novelty and permanence.

If the textual analysis of T'Seleie's testimony offers indeed many insights into indigenous articulations of nationhood, a *discursive analysis* places the testimony into a wider context of collective struggle and resistance. Specifically, the first lines of the extract reveal the presence of a very important literary device: intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992; Kristeva, 1986). According to Fairclough, intertextuality shows 'how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize and dialogue with other texts' (2003, p. 17). Within his testimony, in fact, T'Seleie explicitly refers to two other testimonies[77], one of them being Philip Blake's, collected less than a month before in Fort McPherson. By incorporating the words of Blake into his own speech, T'Seleie creates a powerful connection between his and Blake's intervention, where the latter is used to support the argument of the first. In this regard, it is particularly interesting to notice what kind of content from Blake's testimony Frank T'Seleie decides to include. While Blake's testimony is indeed a very long and articulated one, T'Seleie selects the part which is most openly confrontational, namely where Blake envisions the possibility of a violent reaction from his community ('to blow up the pipeline'), if the freedom of his nation is to be endangered.

Now, while I believe that T'Seleie is very conscious of the power of Blake's testimony, and that, by referring to it, he might have indeed wanted to emphasize the concrete risk of a violent response from Northern communities to the building of the pipeline, I suggest that his use of intertextuality eventually produces a much more powerful discursive effect. When T'Seleie brings Philip Blake into his speech, as well as 'The Dene People of Hay River', 'The Dene People of Fort Franklyn', 'Chief Paul Andrew and his people in Fort Norman', 'old people and young people', 'men and women' and 'people from the Mackenzie Delta to the Great Slave Lake'[78], he is actively *positioning* himself within a broader movement of spatially (the Dene of the Mackenzie Valley) and temporally (young and elders) connected people. In that moment, he is not only speaking for himself and for the people in Fort Good Hope, but, rather, for the whole Dene nation, which, as a multi-layered spatiality made up of many other places and times is here vividly materializing through his words.

Philip Blake

Philip Blake's testimony has been quoted by several authors (Coulthard, 2014; McCall, 2011;

[77] In his speech, T'Seleie refers to the testimonies of Chief Paul Andrew from Fort Norman and Philip Blake from Fort McPherson.
[78] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18, 1769-1770.

Scott, 2007), including Judge Berger himself in his final report (1977, p. 198), and is indeed often considered one of the most thought-provoking of the whole Inquiry. In the extract which I have selected, Blake is not only recalling known issues of land ownership and self-determination, but he is confuting the assumed superiority of western, and more specifically Canadian, understandings of nationhood. Looking at the vocabulary used in the first part of the selection, it is possible to notice a succession of words with expressive value, such as 'your *great* tradition of justice' and 'your *superior* civilization'. It is clear that the use of positive adjectives is here ironic, and aimed at (un)masking the negative connotation Blake gives to the terms 'tradition of justice' and 'civilization'. The latter have in fact been used to legitimize the colonialization of the NWT, and the increased control over the Dene perceived by the "superior" Canadian as marginal and primitive people. In the same way, the recurrence of the grammatical question mode in this part of the speech ('Where is your great tradition of justice today? Does your nation's greed for oil and gas suddenly override justice? What exactly is your superior civilization?') contributes to making Blake's critique even sharper. As Fairclough (1989, p. 126) notices, 'asking, be it for action or information, is generally a position of power'. Therefore, the purpose of these questions is likely to expose the inadequacy of southern-driven development in the North, and, by doing so, to shed light on the existence of alternative paths.

Indeed, while Blake's testimony does contain many elements of explicit critique towards the "Canadian way of life", it can also be seen as much more balanced and somehow cautious, as hinted by the constant shift between different tones and registries. Let us for example take into consideration the following expressions: '*I believe* it is in the self-interest of your nation', '*I believe* that your nation *might wish to* see us…' or again, '*I hope* you will understand'. Compared to the openly accusatory tone of the first part, these sentences seem to favor a more diplomatic and "soft" tone, as made evident in the use of verbs usually associated with mental process (i.e. 'I believe', 'I hope').

Looking at the context of the hearings, and at previous examples illustrating the powerful use of language made by the Dene, I do not tend to interpret these choices as signs of hesitation or of a wish of distancing oneself from the most accusatory statements. On the contrary, I interpret them as very conscious choices, part of a discursive (and very much political) strategy, aimed at achieving the recognition of the Dene nation by the Canadian Government. In the very

last sentence of the quote, Blake asks in fact his interlocutor: 'Can we as Indian nation keep, help Canada to once again become a true democracy?' Blake is aware that the Dene need to negotiate with the government if they want to achieve land rights. Yet, what he places at the center of this difficult negotiation are not the material resources (the minerals), but something much more valuable to his community and potentially much more long-term, namely 'a system of values by which you may survive in the future'. Interestingly, while until now the survival of the Dene nation was the only one at stake, through these few salient words, Blake masterfully links the survival of the whole Canadian nation to the one of the "Nation within". As a body which needs its organs to function properly, it is implied that Canada will *need* to recognize the existence of the Dene nation and the right of its people to self-determination, if it hopes itself to survive in the future.

Discussion: A Nation within another Nation

In the months preceding the Inquiry, several aboriginal communities living in the NWT started to come together in order to formulate a collective response to the economic and political changes taking place at a very fast pace throughout the North. A central part of this response was Dene's articulation of nationhood, which was first formally stated through the adoption of the Dene Declaration, and then further developed and promoted during the Berger Inquiry. Starting from these premises, I have examined three extracts from the testimonies of Stephen Kakfwi, Frank T'Seleie and Philip Blake in order to explore how the (Dene) nation, as a deeply complex spatiality, is produced throughout the hearings.

As pointed out by Peter Russell (1977), in the 1970s, the Dene regarded their nation a 'distinct cultural entity' (p. 163), whose existence was founded on a series common elements shared by its members, such as for example (yet not solely) language, land and history. Such idea of nation might indeed remind of Anthony Smith's view of nationalism, so-called 'ethnosymbolism' (1998), which focused on the role of myths, memories and symbols in the formation and maintenance of modern nation states. However, while the attention towards the role of cultural practices in nation-building is an important point of commonality between ethno-symbolism and indigenous understandings of nationhood, at the same time, there is a fundamental difference which distinguishes indigenous nationalism from other forms of nationalism: namely the lack of

a structured plan finalized at state acquisition. In his theory of indigenous nationalism, Gerald Taiaiake Alfred (1995, p.14) describes the latter as:

> A form which seeks to achieve self-determination not through the creation of a new state, but through the achievement of a cultural sovereignty and a political relationship based on group autonomy reflected in formal self-government arrangements in cooperation with existing state institutions.

This conceptualization is extremely relevant because it acknowledges both the cultural and political dimensions of indigenous claims to nationhood, and regards them as mutually interrelated and interdependent. Such correlation is made particularly evident in the testimonies of Stephen Kakfwi, Frank T'Seleie and Philip Blake, where cultural ('we have our own culture and traditions'; 'a system of values…this we are willing to share') and political ('we have our own political and economic system'; 'long before Canada was formed, we governed our lives') arguments are mobilized to support Dene claim to self-determination. Regarding this concept, Alfred has observed how indigenous self-determination is not (or at least very rarely) aimed at disrupting the state's territorial integrity, and rather, is more interested in achieving a certain degree of recognition within the state's boundaries. I would like to expand on this argument, by drawing upon the concepts of *encapsulation* and *nesting*, which anthropologist Robert Paine introduced in his essay *The Claim of the Fourth World* (1985). With regards to 'encapsulation' (Bailey, 1969), Paine (1985, p.50) writes, 'one might say that the Fourth World comprises Indigenous minorities encapsulated within nation-states or empires. I prefer to say that Fourthworlders are persons who recognize their encapsulation and devise strategies to combat it'. In this regard, I argue that the Dene are very aware of their encapsulation, but actively attempt to resist it by proposing an alternative strategy, i.e. *nesting*. Paine (p. 54) quotes Weinberg's (1975, pp. 101-102) definition of nesting as it follows: 'the image we have in mind is a set of Russian Easter eggs - painted wooden eggs of graduated size, each one nestled within another…a larger egg does not encapsulate but it is simply fitted around the next smaller'. When, in his testimony, Frank T'Seleie remarks 'we declared officially that we are a nation of people, within Canada', he can be seen as actively encouraging a form of nesting. In this sense, he is advocating for the recognition of his people's distinctive status *within* the existing structure of the state. To conclude, the Dene nation, as it is discursively constructed within and outside of the

community hearings, can be seen as a spatiality made up of multiple nested spaces (i.e. the Canadian Nation, the different communities participating at the Inquiry) and temporalities (i.e. past of colonial oppression, present of self-recognition and future of self-government), and thus, equally entangled into a complex web of power relations.

6.5. The indigenous space

> One only needs to look at Alaska to realize that life will never be the same here if the pipeline is allowed to be built.
> -Stephen Kakfwi (Fort Good Hope)[79]

> I will give you an example, Mr. Berger. The pipeline is going through Alaska. Think of all the problems they are having. They no longer have a next door neighbour, they don't even know their children. The service they get are very poor. The pipeline people get service first as they have the money. There is a lot of worries and trouble which the pipeline people brought to them. It will be the same here if it comes through. Maybe even worse.
> -Fred Rabisca (Fort Good Hope)[80]

> These handful of companies also operate in other parts of the world. The resources of these countries are exploited by these companies so that they can benefit themselves and they'll all be prosperous and develop nations of the world. We have seen what happened to these countries and its people. I think there are many lessons we can learn from the experiences of these countries of the third world. Some of these countries have strived and gained independence but had trouble developing because the control and power was still in the hands of a few multi-national corporations. True economic independence was denied them because of this. Our situation in the north is almost the same as the countries of the third world.
> -Robert Andre (Arctic Red River)[81]

> The Inquiry has been a form in which nationally we have been able to look at the valley and focus attention on the kinds of developments that have been planned for the valley and on a national level, people have asked themselves, is this a good plan and why is it a good plan and

[79] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 6 August 1975, Vol. 19, 1838, 9-11.
[80] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18, 1788, 3-10.
[81] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 13 March, 1976, Vol. 47, 4545, 20-30; 4546, 1-4.

> who will it benefit. I think internationally this has been a form in which we have given an example to the international community on how major projects, like the pipeline, should be approached.
> -Georges Erasmus (Rae/Edzo)[82]

Ronald Niezen, in his key work *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (2003), writes that the early 1970s saw the rise of a new global movement, which he calls 'indigenism', deeply grounded in international networks. As he describes it (p.3):

> This movement, it is true, is smaller in scale, more fragile, less turbulent than the nationalist upheavals of the past two centuries, but it nevertheless has the potential to influence the way states manage their affairs, and even to reconfigure the usual alignments of nationalism and state sovereignty.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, between the end of the 1960s and the 1970s, many indigenous organizations started to be established worldwide, both at local and international level, in the attempt to formulate a collective response to long-lasting injustices and inequalities suffered by Native populations. The creation of these organizations, besides constituting a fundamental step in the history of indigenous mobilization, can be seen as the expression of a *politics of scale* (Cox, 1998; Lebel, L., Garden, P. and Imamura, M., 2005; Smith, 1992), where local particularities are brought into a global arena of negotiation and here re-negotiated, as argued by Danish anthropologist Jens Dahl (2012). The indigenous movement emerging out of the common experiences of dispossession, marginalization and displacement has therefore a fundamental *spatial* dimension, which, as I suggest, finds in the Berger Inquiry a key moment of articulation. In light of these considerations, I have identified three distinctive yet interrelated spaces, which are strategically mobilized during the hearings in order to produce the broader spatiality of the *indigenous space*, namely (a) Alaska, (b) the Third World, and (c) the international community.

Stephen Kakfwi and Fred Rabisca

[82] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 11 August, 1976, Vol. 72, 8062, 5-15.

Stephen Kakfwi's and Fred Rabisca's are only two of the many testimonies[83] which explicitly mention the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, a pipeline built between 1974 and 1977 in the North Slope Borough and meant to deliver oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, Alaska.

In 1977, Kenneth M. Lysyk, dean of law from University of British Columbia, conducted an Inquiry on the socio-economic effects of the pipeline in Yukon - the Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry - which resulted in a report (Lysyk, K.M., Bohmer, E.E. and Phelps, L., 1977) published the same year as Berger's report *Northern Homeland, Northern Frontier*. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline was extremely controversial and had to face the opposition of Alaska native groups (mostly Inupiat and Tlinglit communities) besides several environmental organizations.

In their speeches, both Kakfwi and Rabisca illustrate the concerns and the risks associated with the building of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and emphasize that the same kind of issues are likely to be encountered by the communities of the Mackenzie Valley, if the MVP has to be pursued.

The words used in their testimonies when referring to the pipeline are all endowed with a negative connotation ('troubles', 'problems', 'poor', 'worries', 'worse'), and leave no doubts on the catastrophic effects of the pipeline, both in the present and in the future. The interchange of present and future tenses contributes in fact to evoking two separate yet specular spatialities: the Alaskan present and the Canadian future. In the *first*, the pipeline is addressed as an alien technology, which is bringing divisions and marginalization among the communities, and progressively causing their disintegration ('they no longer have a next door neighbour, they don't even know their children'). In the *second*, the pipeline, although not there yet, is expected to produce the same consequences. The consistent use of the modal verb 'will' (Fairclough, 1989, p.126-127), in this regard, reinforces the character of inevitability which many of the sentences acquire, e.g. 'life will never be the same', 'it will be the same here if it comes through. Maybe even worse'. Through the example of Alaska, Dene concerns are framed in a broader context and given a solid spatio-temporal legitimation: the same that happened *back then there* will happen *here in the future.*

Robert Andre

[83] See for example George Barnaby's testimony (full reference in note 87) and North Slope Borough Mayor Eben Hopson's testimony before the Berger Inquiry (1976).

Robert Andre's testimony shares the same prophetical tone of Kakfwi's and Rabisca's testimonies, but, rather than from another Northern aboriginal-populated area, invites to learn from the experience of Third World resource-rich countries. As he notices, many of these countries, although gaining political independence from the colonial state, have been kept economically dependent from foreign corporations, which continue to exploit resources without local residents having any say in the process. The recurrent use of the passive form ('the resources of these countries are exploited', 'we have seen what happens to these countries and its people', 'true economic independence was denied them') configures the Third World countries as (non-agent) participants in a very unequal power relation with the extractive industry. The latter, while described as reduced in size ('these handful of companies', 'few multi-national corporations') compared to its counterpart ('countries and people'), is nevertheless perceived as extremely influential, and as the only one truly in charge of the countries' economic and political development.

In addition, it is interesting to notice that, differently from Kakfwi's and Rabisca's testimonies where only the present and the future are evoked, Andre's speech engages with one more temporal scale: the past. As rhetorically powerful lines such as 'we have seen what happens' hint at, the idea of learning from the past to prevent a similar (destructive) future emerges as the main message that Andre wants to direct both to his community[84] and to Berger. His words contain in fact a fundamental warning, i.e. that his people might indeed suffer a similar fate as that of other resource-rich countries, if they do not secure themselves the ownership (and governance) of the land. At the same time, however, the last sentence of the extract - 'Our situation in the north is almost the same as the countries of the third world' - and the presence of the adverb 'almost' might indeed suggest another key of interpretation. In fact, while drawing a parallel with the situation of many third world countries, Andre also emphasizes the fundamental distinctiveness of his people's status. It is worth to remind that, at the time of the Berger Inquiry, the Dene of the Mackenzie Valley were already considering themselves part of the Fourth World[85], and asking

[84] The Gwich'in of Arctic Red River.
[85] In the Dene Declaration, it is stated: 'We the Dene are part of the Fourth World.- And as the peoples and Nations of the world have come to recognize the existence and rights of those peoples ,who make up the Third World the day must come when the nations of the Fourth World will come to be recognized and respected.' (Watkins, 1977, p.4).

for official recognition. In light of these considerations, Andre's testimony potentially acquires a deeper significance, in the sense that, while recognizing that aboriginal communities are now part of the distinctive collectivity of the Fourth World, Andre also implies that they are going to need more than the mere 'recognition' claimed in the Dene Declaration [86], and rather, an actual guarantee that their political and economic rights will be legally and practically acknowledged and safeguarded.

Georges Erasmus

Georges Erasmus's testimony is undoubtedly a very complex one, where he brings in different themes and issues, and often engages with his interlocutors in a quite provocative manner. In this extract, he celebrates the Berger Inquiry, by emphasizing its value as a unique platform of negotiation for the Dene at local, national and international level. These three scales vividly materialize during his speech, where he skillfully shifts among 'the valley', 'the national level', and finally, the 'international community'. The same interchange is traceable in the construction of the sentences, where Erasmus places respectively 'The Inquiry', the 'people', 'I', and the final 'we' as subjects.

Taking into consideration the overall cohesion of the text, I suggest that this succession of spaces and subjects is far from random, and can instead be regarded as a very conscious example of *scaling*. Sejersen (2015, p. 171) defines scaling 'as an act of productive creativity that produces subject positions, potentiality for navigation and particular forms of knowing'. In his speech, Erasmus appears to be using scaling to move from the particularity of the valley (the local/national scale) to the broader international arena (the global scale), and to thus simultaneously engage with two different, yet interrelated power structures. The Berger Inquiry is here configured as the linkage between the first two scales, as shown by the rhetorical repetition of almost the same incipit at the beginning and at the end of the extract: 'The Inquiry has been a form in which nationally…' and 'internationally this has been a form in which…'. Erasmus's cunning exercise of scaling is however not limited to the projection and configuration of two spatial levels (national/international), but extends to the creation of two separate, yet strictly interdependent subject positions. In fact, while nationally, the central subject are the

[86] See previous note.

'people', who have started questioning the risks and impacts of megaprojects, internationally, a new collective subject has emerged, a 'we', which is now fully conscious of its ability to influence the international agenda. The two scales then, because entrenched in a set of distinctive understandings, practices and (power) relations, are also both necessary in order to facilitate a shift in the Dene subject position: namely, from people who are empower-*ing* themselves to a fully empower-*ed* collectivity ('we have given an example').

Discussion: indigenousness in the making

Through the words of the young leaders and of the older representatives of different Dene communities, an 'indigenous space' (Dahl, 2012) vividly materializes. As I have attempted to show here, this space is discursively created out of the intersection and interaction among multiple concurrent spaces and associated scales, which are produced and performed by the participants at the hearings. Among these, I have identified *Alaska* and the *Third World* as the first two spaces of reference, strategically mobilized in the testimonies of Stephen Kakfwi, Fred Rabisca and Robert Andre in order to draw a parallel with similar histories of exploitation and lack of local consent. In the third extract, taken from Georges Erasmus's testimony, the *international community* emerges not only as the new relevant interlocutor of many endangered communities, but as a new collective platform and space of negotiation from where different indigenous peoples can voice their concerns and requests.

Quite interestingly, while in previous extracts personal pronouns such as 'we' and 'they' were used to signal difference and to dichotomously create a separation between indigenous and non-indigenous subjects, this time, the same pronouns are used to express and reinforce commonality. 'They' (i.e. the Alaskan natives, the countries of the Third World) are indeed part of a bigger 'we', which shares with the first both issues and priorities. Within the three testimonies, I have noticed the emergence of what Jens Dahl (ibid.) calls 'indigenousness in the making' (p. 50), a new increasingly global identity that, during the Inquiry, the Dene were in the process of negotiating.

At the same time, it is also important to remark that difference is still stressed and maintained (as the 'almost' in Andre's testimony suggests). In this regard, considering the main discursive strategies enacted by the indigenous movement in the years to follow (Minde, 1996),

difference will indeed be consistently imbued with a political significance, and used to exercise leverage over non-indigenous others.

6.6. Dene engagements with time

As I have previously observed, thinking in terms of spatiality means to focus on how both space and time are socially produced, and to take into equal consideration how they mutually influence social relations. During the Berger Inquiry, not only different spaces and places are continuously evoked by the participants, but also multiple and interconnected temporalities. For this reason, through the following extracts, I am going to explore Dene engagements with time, and, more specifically, how the future is strategically envisioned in the present.

> Yet white people say that Indians live only for today, and that we cannot plan for the future. What are you planning for the future, Mr. Berger? Are you making plans that you can pass on to your people with pride 500 years from now? Before any decision is made bout the pipeline, Mr. Berger, find out what it would mean for our land in a hundred years time. We want a world pretty much like we have right now. We want a world where our grandchildren can like and value the same things we value.
> -Richard Nerysoo (Fort McPherson)[87]

> We are told by people from the south who really want us to be like them, that we should get in the action and grab some of the money and the chances that are passing by, to get into what is happening. They say we can't stop what is happening in the North. They say we can't stop the pipeline or the system that is moving in from the South (…) There was statements made that we can't stop or change what is happening, but the people are changing what is happening.
> -George Barnaby (Fort Good Hope)[88]

> What I would like to do today is give what I think is an overview, a a summary of what our people have been saying to you and take a look at the experience of the Inquiry in the context of Dene history; in the context of Dene history as it relates to our past; in the context of Dene history; in the context of Dene history as it relates to the Dene as we are present; and the Inquiry process as will relate to us as Dene people as a nation in the future. (…) We want to decide on

[87] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 10 July 1975, Vol. 13, 1184, 16-26.
[88] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18, 1779, 28-30; 1780, 1-5, 14-17.

> our land, what is going to happen. It's not as some people keep referring to as looking back. We are not looking back. We do not want to remain static. We do not want to stop the clock of time. Our old people when they talk about how the Dene ways should be kept by young people and they talk about stopping the pipeline until we settle our land claims. They are not looking back. They are looking forward. They are looking as far ahead in the future as they possibly can and so are we all.
> -Georges Erasmus (Rae/Edzo)[89]

Richard Nerysoo

In this second extract from his testimony, Richard Nerysoo provocatively asks Judge Thomas Berger whether he thinks that the Mackenzie Valley pipeline would represent a sustainable solution in the following centuries, and remarks that, unlikely the 'white people', the Dene are indeed making long-term plans for their future. The key word in this extract is precisely 'future', to which other words - such as 'planning', 'land', 'grandchildren', 'present' and 'now' - are directly connected, and from which they acquire their meaning.

Nerysoo projects a future which is '500 years from now' or 'in a hundred years time'. While such expressions might be interpreted as a mere succession of hyperboles, employed in order to put pressure on the interlocutor, and potentially, to exaggerate the proportion of the effects of the pipeline itself, I believe that in this specific context, it would be too simplistic to reduce Nerysoo's words to a rhetoric exercise. Rather, by envisioning a time which is extremely far from the moment in which the Berger Inquiry takes place, these temporal utterances contribute to delineating a striking difference between Dene and non-Dene understandings of time. In the same way, the double use of the grammatical question mode - 'What are you planning for the future, Mr. Berger? Are you making plans that you can pass on to your people with pride 500 years from now?' - is not just (although definitely also) aimed at instilling anxiety in the interlocutor, but also at encouraging him (in this case, Berger) to actively reflect upon the temporality of the pipeline. In this sense, it is implied that while non-indigenous stakeholders consider the value of the MVP merely in the short-term, i.e. how the pipeline will bring benefits

[89] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 11 August, 1976, Vol. 72, 8060, 7-15; 8067, 7-17.

and opportunities in the next few decades, the Dene are more concerned about the long-term effects of the project, and are thus planning further ahead.

The southern critique that 'Indians only live for today' is confuted as the present is endowed with a new significance, becoming the moment where future scenarios are envisioned, and where possible risks and responsibilities are strategically anticipated. Present and future, rather than separated, exist therefore in a relationship of strict interdependence and inner continuity. With regard to the latter, Nerysoo projects his vision of what the future should look like, by repeating the same two words - 'we want' - at the beginning of several sentences. As it appears, rather than encouraging a radical transformation, his intention is to safeguard a sort of *continuity within change*, so that future generations 'can like and value the same things' as he and his ancestors before him did. In Nerysoo's last sentences, then, past, present and future are interwoven together into a fluid and multilayered temporality, which, although not excluding transformation, is deeply informed by existing memories, experiences and practices.

George Barnaby

While in the previous extract the future was occupying a central role, in the testimony of George Barnaby, the main temporal dimension becomes the *present.* In his speech, Barnaby reports the opinion of Southern Canadians, who, convinced that hydrocarbon extraction is the only alternative for the North, are urging aboriginal populations to quickly seize the opportunities carried by the prospective megaprojects ('we are told by people from the south that we should get in the action and grab some of the money and the chances that are passing by').

Southern perspectives are introduced by means of indirect speech ('we are told that…', 'they say…', 'there were statements made that…'), which serves to exemplify the distance between Northern and Southern visions of Northern development. It is in this sense implied that the latter are authoritatively imposed on the first, as suggested also by the recurrence of content clauses in a negative form ('they say we can't stop'). The only vaguely active role that the Dene are reserved and encouraged to play in the process of resource exploitation is that of casual exploiters/ "money-grabbers" ('we should get in the action and grab some of the money and the chances').

The substantial use of the present continuous ('chances that are *passing* by', 'what is *happening*', 'the pipeline or the system that is *moving* in') as the predominant tense definitely contributes to making the present appear extremely real and crucial, and thus, also contributes to creating a general sense of urgency. In the second part of the extract, Barnaby introduces in fact a final twist, which can be read as the direct consequence of the vivid and anxious state of 'present-ness' (Bryant, 2016) created by the pipeline proposals. While acknowledging that change is indeed happening, he also declares that 'people are changing what is happening', claiming thus for the Dene not a passive role of spectators nor of mere recipients of someone else's plans, but, rather, of drivers of current and future transformations. In this final sentence which, through the conjunction 'but', marks a sharp break from previous considerations, Barnaby eventually overturns southern assumptions, reasserts aboriginal agency, and claims back for his people the power to manage both the present and the future.

Georges Erasmus

While in the two other testimonies it is possible to identify a stronger focus of the speakers either on the future or on the present, this extract from the testimony of Georges Erasmus combines three temporal scales together - past, present and future - and, by doing so, powerfully expands the significance of the Berger Inquiry across time (and space).

From the very first lines, Erasmus acknowledges the importance of the Inquiry as a historical moment for the Dene, who, through the hearings have been writing and re-writing their history. The making of Dene history, far from being something uniquely related to the past, is in fact stretched through time, and understood as a process that relates 'to our past', 'to the Dene as we are present' and 'to us as Dene people as nation in the future'. The repetition of the same formula ('in the context of Dene history as it relates to…') at the beginning of each sentence contributes not only to making these lines sound particularly emphatic, but also to establishing a fundamental connection among different stages of Dene history. The ultimate result is, as I observe, a very fluid and dynamic notion of both Dene collective identity and history, where of them are understood as undergoing a process of constant becoming, rather than as fixable, static and immutable entities.

In the second part of the extract, Erasmus re-centers the discussion on the pipeline, and on the necessary settlement of land claims. Interestingly, however, he does so by using *time* as an argument. As happened in the two previous testimonies, also in this one, southern perspectives of Dene temporal understandings and practices are questioned and confuted by the speaker. When he says 'it's not as some people keep referring to as looking back', Erasmus is in fact defending the focus that the Dene place on the past in order to better prepare for the future. In this sense, the past, understood as a collection of memories, traditions and experiences is regarded not as some kind of "bubble" trapping aboriginal people into an alternative or primitive reality ('we do not want to stop the clock of time'), but rather, as the main source of knowledge which helps communities make conscious and legitimate choices for the future. This understanding is even more vividly conveyed through the image of the 'old people', who, as the subjects of the last four sentences, are eventually placed at the center of the speech.

On the grammatical level, it is worth to notice that 'they' (i.e. the elders) are associated with material ('they are looking forward…they are looking as far ahead as they possibly can') and verbal processes ('when they talk about how the Dene ways should be kept… and they talk about stopping the pipeline…'), which provide them with a high degree of agency and legitimation. It is the elders who, because of their more extensive knowledge of the past and, *thus*, of their greater forward-thinking, are the ones truly entitled to guide any future decision on the land.

Discussion: narrative memory, history and imagination

In the last part of this analysis, I have tried to explore how and for what purposes time is mobilized during the hearings. What I have found is that different, yet interconnected temporal frameworks are constructed by the participants, who in their speeches project several ideas and visions of the past, present and future. The *past* often materializes in the speakers' very evocative storytelling and is configured by many of them as a space of - both happy and traumatic - memories, experiences and transmitted knowledge. The elders, because of their role of keepers of the past and guides to the future, are endowed with a high degree of credibility and respect, and considered central figures to ensure the community's cultural survival. In this sense, it is important to notice that the past is not addressed as some kind of frozen, static and de-attached temporality, and rather, is continuously narrated and re-negotiated, proving thus to be extremely

alive, and relevant also for the development, perception and experience of the other temporal dimensions. It derives that 'learning from the past', whether this means to recall and compare episodes of colonial violence with current threats or to remember the teachings of the ancestors as a better way to prepare for future challenges, emerges as a key message as well as strategic tool within several testimonies.

When it comes to the *present*, its pivotal role is directly linked both to the past and, especially, to the future. The present is thus experienced as a moment of responsibility, and, simultaneously, of precariousness and ongoing transformation, which thus calls for immediate action.

The perception of an imminent (extractive) future contributes to triggering a specific temporal/affective disposition which anthropologist Gisa Weszkalnys (2014), in her study of oil exploration in Sao Tomé and Principe, calls 'anticipation'. According to Wezkalnys, 'to anticipate is not simply to expect; it is to realize that something is about to happen and, importantly, to act on that premonition' (p.212). The MVP proposals and the whole atmosphere of expectation and anxiety generated by the increasing hydrocarbon explorations in the North undoubtedly instilled in Northern residents not only doubts and hopes for the future, but also an extraordinary sense of awareness of the present, comparable to what Rebecca Bryant (2016) calls 'the uncanny present'. Bryant defines the uncanny present as those 'moments when the present that [we] usually do not perceive as such becomes anxiously visceral to us as a moment caught between past and future' (p. 20). One can say then that it is indeed because the pipeline is not there yet, but its concrete realization will indeed depend upon present decisions, that the Berger Inquiry is no less than a turning point. In this extremely significant moment, aboriginal peoples are urged to act, and to demonstrate that they are already ahead of their "opponents", and perhaps, even of themselves. The force of the uncanny present is manifested in expressions such as 'the people are changing what is happening' or 'our old people… are looking forward', which acquire a very specific meaning in the light of the broader transformations taking place in the North during the years of the Berger Inquiry.

> I want to tell you that we have lots of time. We will stay here today and tomorrow and the day after that, and we will stay for the weekend if there are people who still haven't been heard from

> when the weekend arrives. So I think that we can begin now and if anyone wishes to speak, we will have time to hear from all of you, but whoever wishes to start may simply do so now.
> -Judge Thomas Berger, Aklavik [90]

The Berger Inquiry was held in cabins and community halls across the North, spaces that communities regarded as familiar and that were continuously arranged and re-arranged throughout the hearing process. While counteracting the hectic temporality of extractivism with the slow and multilayered one of indigenous storytelling, the Inquiry's crucial significance as a unique arena of negotiation, appearance and performance for Northern aboriginal peoples eventually shaped a similarly, yet less explicitly urgent time management. Although in Berger's words, people would have 'lots of time' to talk, the responsibility of using this time in the best possible way, e.g. by selecting the kind of information which will most probably convince Berger not to approve the pipeline, was eventually of the participants only. For this reason, in spite of having indeed plenty of time for their interventions, and much more freedom in this regard than what they will have for example during the JRP hearings (Chapter 7), by entering the hearing space, witnesses were also entering a specific *space-time* which they were not only urged to co-produce, but also *use* in the best possible way.

Finally, looking at how the *future* is evoked by the speakers in their testimonies, it is interesting to notice how this is often perceived and thus envisioned not as one possible scenario, but as a clear and inevitable destiny. In the words of Dene speakers, there is no place left to doubt that the future with the pipeline will be a future of violence and destruction, as much as the future where land rights have been achieved and where younger generations have inherited the knowledge of their ancestors will be a future of prosperity and happiness. To make an example, in his testimony, Frank T'Seleie fiercely repeats multiple times that 'there will be no pipeline' because his people 'are making plans not just for the next five or ten or twenty years, but plans that will guarantee the[ir] survival (…) for the next hundreds of years'. What these powerful lines contain, besides a very specific and absolutely non-negotiable idea of future, is another fundamental element recurring in many testimonies - such as Richard Nerysoo's - and namely, the opposition between a *long-term* and a *short-term* understanding of the future.

[90] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 2 April 1975, Vol. 1 ,3, 7-14.

Indigenous peoples all over the world emphasize that their livelihoods and traditions have survived for thousands of years. In the same way, many of the participants at the Berger Inquiry criticize the short-sighted nature of extractive plans, by stressing how their communities are instead making plans for hundreds of years ahead in the future. Planning has indeed a great importance in this discussion. While it is undoubted that the hectic state of *present-ness* created by the pipeline proposals has indeed pushed Northern aboriginal communities to make plans for the future, and to start formulating a collective response, I would not imply too quickly that planning is a whole new temporal activity encouraged by present events. I will attempt to explain my argument.

In his testimony, Sam Raddi, a blind Inuit hunter and trapper from Inuvik[91] recalls the memory of the old days, and tells Berger that 'every day was never the same. One day weather is really good; next day the going is hard'[92]. In this short passage, Raddi points out a fundamental feature of many indigenous societies, and especially of those reliant on hunting and trapping, namely a general sense of readiness and a deep understanding of change, which derives from the cyclical and yet, often unpredictable nature of resources. As observed by anthropologists such as Frank Sejersen (1998), Hugh Brody (1981) and Harvey Feit (1994), hunting is an activity which requires a certain predisposition and training to risk, being characterized by unpredictability and unexpectedness, and thus continuously challenging human adaptation and self-management. It derives that while indigenous peoples are often framed within a static temporality of nostalgia, slowness and repetition, the ways they mobilize the past, the present and the future suggest something very different.

Indeed, from the analysis of the testimonies presented during the Berger Inquiry, I have come to two main conclusions in this regard. The *first* is that Dene participants engage with time in an extremely dynamic and creative way. The past, regardless of whether traumatic or nostalgic, is in the hearings charged with new meanings and perspectives, and progressively transformed into a common history of belonging, resistance and solidarity. The present, on the other hand, materializes as extremely vivid, and is perceived as a turning point, i.e. a crucial moment between past and future, whose experience and development will depend upon how both

[91] Later President of the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE).
[92] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 28 January, 1976, Vol. 36, 3458, 29-30.

the past and the future will be envisioned and understood. Finally, the future is omnipresent, i.e. not there yet, but constantly evoked and actively planned through scenarios, predictions and prophecies. Many of the testimonies presented at the hearings recall indeed the idea of planning, understood here as the art of adapting to changing circumstances and of finding creative solutions to present and future challenges. As pointed out before, rather than being strictly dependent upon present circumstances, planning and related anticipation strategies should be understood as fundamentally inherent to the lifestyle of many Northern communities, and guided by broader concerns over the wellbeing of younger generations.

This leads me directly to my *second* conclusion, namely that within the context of the hearings, time (just like space) is understood and mobilized as profoundly dynamic, relational and scalable. In this sense, something which I found extremely surprising - at least at the beginning - and very fascinating while reading some of the testimonies has been the ability of many speakers to naturally shift from one temporal scale to another through storytelling (Cruikshank, 2000). As it has emerged, in the same speech, a Dene chief would thus recall memories of hunting from his youth, powerfully re-enact the moment when Alexander Mackenzie first met the Dene, talk about present development plans, and narrate of an unborn child from hundreds of years later. In this sense, the stories told by the participants at the Inquiry work as what Pedersen and Nielsen (2013) call trans-temporal hinges, i.e. 'gathering point[s] in which different temporalities are momentarily assembled' (p.122). I suggest that these dynamic assemblages of overlapping myths, histories, memories and imaginations can be seen as the expression of a fundamentally fluid, relational and non-linear understanding of time and space (or using Massey's terminology, of space-time). It is this unique configuration which, as I am going to further argument in the conclusions to this work, allows the Dene to shape a very complex and potentially elusive *spatio-temporal politics*, where political claims are not necessarily framed within a fixed timescale or a specific locality, but extend across a more free-flowing and open-ended spatial and temporal horizon, in which different places and moments are strategically evoked and conjoined at the same time.

6.7. Operationalizing Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory

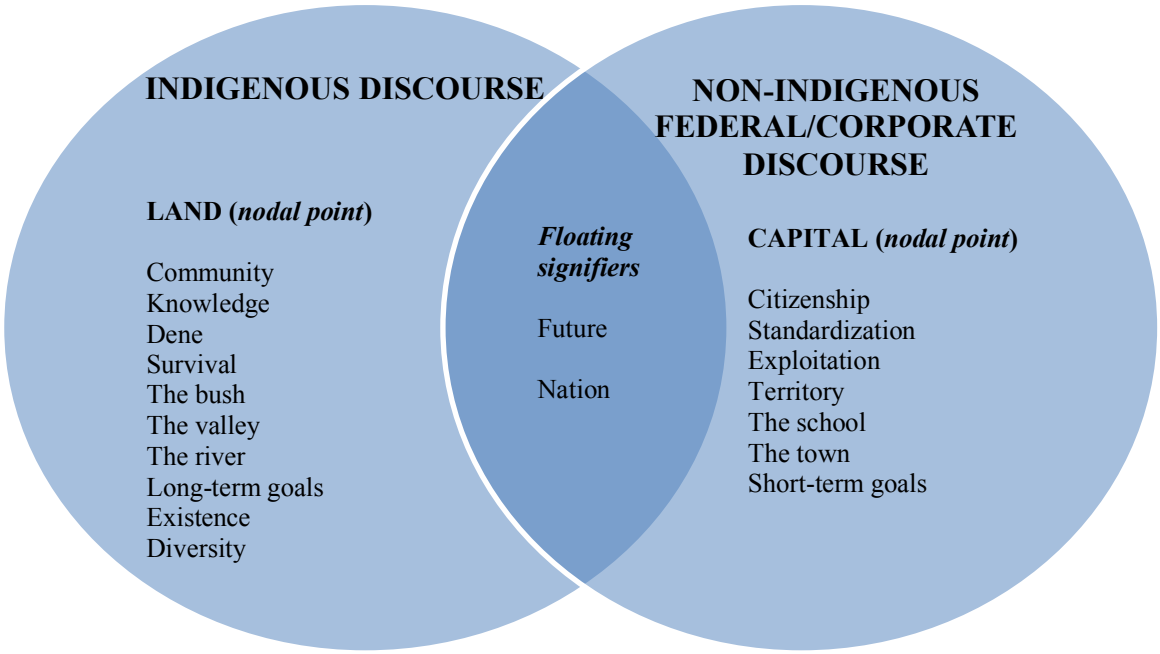
Throughout the previous paragraphs, I have drawn upon Fairclough's CDA in order to analyze how Dene participants at the Berger Inquiry use language to construct different spatialities. A

focus on the textual dimension of Fairclough's analytical framework has not only allowed me to unravel the multiple and creative ways Northern aboriginal people engage with issues of space and time, but also to detect the linguistic patterns and strategic wording characterizing many of the testimonies, where nothing is ever left to chance. While the language used within the community hearings has been undoubtedly informed by the specific historical and institutional context of the Berger Inquiry - namely, one where the possibility of a pipeline through NWT was perceived (or made to be perceived) as extremely real and where the indigenous movement was rapidly gaining momentum- at the same time, language should also be seen as itself productive of new understandings, practices and relations. 'Land', 'nation', 'future' are thus only some of the concepts which during the Berger Inquiry undergo a process of radical re-thinking and re-negotiation. On these premises, I insist that the aboriginal people participating at the Inquiry should be regarded as very powerful actors, who are aware of the relevance of the hearings as a unique space of negotiation and performance (Morris and Fondahl, 2002) and who use this space in order to produce or reinforce certain discourses.

According to Fairclough (1992a, p. 64), discourse has constructive effects on 1) 'social identities' and 'subject positions', 2) 'social relationships between people', and 3) 'systems of knowledge and belief'. Drawing upon Halliday's functional grammar (2013), Fairclough defines these three elements the 'identity', 'relational' and 'ideational' functions of language.
In this regard, my analysis of the Berger Inquiry points at the emergence of an "indigenous discourse", developed within (as well as outside of) the community hearings, which helps construct 1) the identity of the aboriginal from the Mackenzie Valley as legitimate owners of the land; 2) the relationship between Northern residents and government/industry representatives as one characterized by historical injustices and oppression, and finally, 3) the knowledge and beliefs on notions such as 'land', 'nation' and 'future' according to specific worldviews, which are often mobilized in direct opposition with non-indigenous ones.

I would like now to conclude this analytical chapter by exploring the opposition between the 'indigenous discourse' and another discourse which I have here termed 'non-indigenous federal/corporate discourse'. It is important to notice that, although many of the characteristics of the 'non-indigenous discourse' are indeed traceable also outside of the context of the hearings, I

am here interested in exploring how, throughout the hearings, this discourse is produced and formulated *by* rather than *as well as* the indigenous one. In order to do so, while acknowledging the fundamental epistemological differences between Fairclough's CDA and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory (2001), I am convinced that the latter, by providing some very precise concepts, would allow me to better examine the two discourses, and to reveal the inner ambiguity informing their production.



As it is possible to see from the scheme above, each of the two discourses gravitates around a *nodal point*, i.e. a privileged sign around which other signs, so-called *moments,* are organized and bound together into a discursive formation. Nodal points, although empty in themselves, gain a specific meaning when inserted into a discourse. Between the two discourses are what Laclau and Mouffe call *floating signifiers*, i.e. 'signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 28).

On the one hand, in the *indigenous discourse*, the nodal point which contributes to binding the whole discourse together is 'land'. From the testimonies, 'land' emerges in fact as a central concept, which, through the process known as *articulation* - i.e. any practice establishing a relation between elements - provides potentially polysemous signifiers (*elements*), such as 'community', 'Dene' or 'tradition', with a very specific meaning (thus transforming them into

moments). The land emerges as the very foundation of the community, which would be otherwise deprived of a fundamental unifying element, as well as of its main source of knowledge and of material and spiritual survival. The land, far from being associated with one singular temporal dimension, is similarly evoked through and associated to different spaces, such as the 'bush', the 'valley' and the 'river', which all emerge as spaces of memory, identification and belonging.

On the other hand, in the *non-indigenous discourse*, embodied here by the Canadian Government and the (petro)corporate world, the central signifier or nodal point is instead 'capital'. Capital encapsulates the whole non-indigenous discourse and directly determines the meaning of concepts such as 'citizenship' or 'time'. In the indigenous discourse, the 'land' represents both a material and immaterial element of commonality for indigenous communities, whose very existence is connected to the experiences, values and traditions developed on it. Conversely, in the non-indigenous discourse, 'capital' shapes distinctions and increases inequalities: in this regard, apparently inclusionary categories such as 'citizen' are instead understood as attempts to increase standardization (against the appreciation of difference), and to incorporate minorities into the system of government. Furthermore, from the perspective of space-time, while indigenous discourse is associated with a multiplicity of spatial and temporal levels, non-indigenous discourse follows the hectic and short-sighted temporality of capital and is seen as operating within anonymous and alienating spaces where diversity and spontaneity are constantly threatened, such as 'the town' and 'the school'.

Between the two discourses are what discourse theory names 'floating signifiers', i.e. terms/concepts whose meaning is deeply contested and which different discourses try to configure. I have identified two main floating signifiers which acquire a different meaning according to which discourse appropriates them, namely 'nation' and 'future'.

'Nation' is a highly complex signifier, which in the case of the non-indigenous discourse is seen as coinciding with the idea of nation-state, and is thus understood as an entity which, besides being characterized by a general homogeneity - members of the nation-state share same history, language, traditions, etc. -, is entitled to exercise sovereignty over a given territory. It results that non-indigenous ideas of nation rely upon and actively seek unity, whether of

territory, identity or priorities. On the other hand, indigenous articulations of nationhood, while sharing the same argument of commonality (ethno-nationalism), are also more generally aimed at a recognition of mutual existence - as previously mentioned, at a nation 'within' another nation - rather than at the replacement of existing state structures.

Besides 'nation', 'future' is the other concept which is constructed and understood very differently by the two competing discourses. The non-indigenous discourse is in fact often criticized for its short-term configuration of future which - because completely dependent on the volatility of petroleum investments - is fundamentally un-predictable and un-plannable, and can thus only be limited to the next twenty/thirty years. Inherently uncertain, the future projected and shaped by capital is one which needs to be constantly anticipated in the present in order to be made governable. Conversely, the future as understood by the indigenous discourse is a long-term one, extending up to hundreds of years ahead. In response to the uncertainty and fragility characterizing non-indigenous understandings of the future, indigenous participants at the hearings often show to have very precise and vivid visions of the future- for example, those resulting from prophecies (Irlbacher-Fox, 2010, pp. 91-95) - and configure the latter more in terms of continuity rather than of drastic transformation or linear succession.

6.8. Conclusions: 'There is no politics in our way of life'

From these observations on the meanings attributed by the two discourses to their floating signifiers, a clear *discursive struggle* emerges, as the two discourses attempt to influence and manage their political and historical context according to their visions and priorities.

However, I stated at the beginning of this chapter that my main analytical goal would be to understand how indigenous participants at the hearings engage with issues of space and time, and how, by doing so, they produce and (re)negotiate a complex series of power relations.

It is undoubted that, in the years of the Berger Inquiry, a broader 'indigenous discourse' emerged in Northern Canada and in many other countries. The Dene testimonies presented at the community hearings can be seen as a fundamental expression of this discourse, being the context where multiple visions and understandings of the world are constructed and mobilized. At the same time, what I have tried to point out through my analysis is that the hearings are not only an important arena for the development of the 'indigenous discourse', but also for the articulation of

a second antagonistic discourse, which I have termed the 'non-indigenous federal/corporate discourse'. Although potentially traceable within a variety of documents - e.g. political speeches, newspaper articles, policies and pieces of legislation, etc. - this discourse, as I have observed, has been powerfully mobilized and opposed by indigenous participants at the Berger Inquiry through a strategic act of 'othering'. In this sense, I argue that the strict dichotomy and subsequent discursive struggle between a non-indigenous and an indigenous discourse, although no less concrete and tangible in its manifestations, should also be seen as evoked, reinforced and performed by indigenous participants within the hearings, in order to convince their relevant listeners (e.g. Berger) of the legitimacy of their claims.

During his testimony presented in Fort Good Hope, George Barnaby told Judge Berger, 'there is no politics in our way of life'[93]. I will not deny that, when I read the hearing transcript, my first reaction was a mix of skepticism and cynicism. I thought "obviously there must be politics in their life. They are sitting at a pipeline hearing!" Yet, after having read hundreds of testimonies presented at the Berger Inquiry, I would argue that it was as soon as the Dene and the Inuit of the Mackenzie Valley entered the negotiation space, it was *there* that politics entered their way of life. It was there, suddenly, that life - whether this meant to tell stories about their youth in the bush, fishing and to trap along the Mackenzie River or to hope that future generations will inherit the land of their ancestors - became politicized, and aboriginal experiences, voices and perceptions part of something bigger.

In the 1970s, at the time of the Berger Inquiry, Canadian aboriginal communities started to mobilize and to formulate a collective position and vision for the future. In this context of transformation, the Berger Inquiry's community hearings should be seen as an exceptional space of appearance, where discourses of identity, agency and future intersect, and from which existing power structures and relations are re-negotiated and forever transformed. In the following years, as I am going to show in the next chapter, many things would change, and the new round of hearings held across the North almost thirty years after the Berger Inquiry would emerge as one of the most emblematic results of these transformations.

[93]Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August, 1975, Vol. 18, 1779, 20-21.

Chapter 7. Remembering a (re)active past and anticipating an (extr)active future. The Joint Review Panel Hearings (2006-2007).

7.1. Background: a new bureaucratic North

The Berger Inquiry ended in 1977 with the publication of the report *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland* which recommended a 10-year moratorium on the construction of the MVP until aboriginal land-claims were settled. From 1973 until nowadays, twenty-six comprehensive land claim agreements have been signed between Canadian aboriginal groups and the federal government[94]. Among these, many have been concluded by aboriginal peoples living in the Mackenzie Valley, such as the Inuvialuit (1984), the Gwich'in (1992), the Sahtu Dene and Métis (1994) and the Tlicho (2003). While I do not intend to go into the details of these agreements, it is worth to notice that the majority of them favored a *corporate* model of development and decision-making, by establishing village and regional corporations which, as some have noticed, 'gained an institutional advantage over more traditional cultural organizations' (Zellen, 2008, p.139). In this sense, an important aspect of the land-claim agreements has been the parallel creation of a complex of regulatory bodies responsible, among the other things, for matters such as environmental assessments, land use planning and regulation of land and water use.

In this introductory section, I am going to illustrate the main phases leading to the resurgence of the MVP in the early 2000s. By tracing some of the institutional transformations fostered by the land-claim agreements together with the rules, the actors and the hierarchies emerging from the latter, this brief overview is also meant to sketch an outline of the new corporate-bureaucratic model of Northern development.

Old pipeline, new alliances

In order to implement many of the provisions contained in the single land-claim agreements and to provide an integrated system for land and water management in the NWT, in 1998, the

[94] With the 1982 Constitution Act, these agreements have been given the status of modern treaties and provided with constitutional protection according to Section 35.

Parliament passed the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA), which established the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB).

At the beginning of 2000s, a renewed interest in the MVP started to emerge. In January, thirty Inuvialuit, Sahtu and Gwich'in leaders from the NWT met in Fort Liard and Fort Simpson to formalize their support to the project. In this occasion, the Aboriginal Pipeline Group (APG) was established. Shortly afterwards, a consortium made up of Imperial Oil Resources (in the leading position), Conoco Phillips Ltd., Shell Canada Ltd. and Exxon-Mobil Canada, announced its decision to look into the feasibility of reviving the pipeline. The project was, this time, named the Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP).

In order to address the extremely complex regulatory aspects of the MGP, the Federal Government and the petroleum industry launched a series of so-called 'regulatory roadmaps'. Simultaneously, the MVEIRB started to encourage periodic meetings between the chairs of the Tribunals with public hearing process[95] to foster better coordination among them. In 2002, the chairs finalized a Cooperation Plan[96], which structured the whole review process of the project, by separating environmental assessment, on the one hand, from regulatory review, on the other hand. In this regard, the Plan recommended the creation of two panels: the Joint Review Panel (JRP), to take care of environmental and socio-economic impacts, and the National Energy Board (NEB) panel to take care of the regulatory process, and of the issuance of a certificate of public convenience and necessity. Although separated, the two bodies would work in strict coordination and take into consideration each other's observations and conclusions. Between 2003 and 2004, several agreements were concluded among the regulators involved in the project, including the Agreement for an Environmental Impact Review of the Mackenzie Gas Project (JRPA).

[95] Namely, the National Energy Board, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, Northwest Territories Water Board, Government of the Northwest Territories, Environmental Impact Screening Committee and Environmental Impact Review Board, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region Land Administration, the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Sahtu Land and Water Board and the Gwich'in Land and Water Board.

[96] The full name of the Plan is 'Cooperation Plan for the Environmental Impact Assessment and Regulatory Review of a Northern Gas Pipeline Project through the Northwest Territories'.

The Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project

The JRPA drafted the terms of reference for the JRP regarding the scope and phases of the environmental impact review. The scope of the JRP mandate was, according to Section 2 of the JRPA, '[to] have regard to the protection of the environment from the significant adverse impacts of proposed developments, and to the protection of the existing and future social, cultural and economic well-being of residents and communities' (MVEIRB, Inuvialuit Game Council and Minister of the Environment, 2004). In order to ensure the participation of aboriginal groups at the review process, the JRP was to hold a series of public hearings for 'the community and people to present their views about the potential impacts of the Project on the environment[97]'. The total time for the conduction of the hearings and the submission of the report was set to 10 months. In August 2004, the JRP was officially established, as an independent body composed of seven members[98]: three appointed by the MVEIRB and four by the Minister of Environment, where two of these were chosen by the Inuvialuit Game Council. According to its mandate and procedural rules, the JRP was meant to guarantee fairness to every intervenor (including Aboriginal ones) by considering all evidence, issuing information requests to parties, making motions, etc. The work of the JRP was to conclude in a report and a series of final recommendations.

Shortly after the appointment of the JRP, the project proponents submitted an official application to construct a 1,220 km pipeline along the Mackenzie River and terminating into Northern Alberta, where it would join the existing gas pipeline grid. The application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) filed by Imperial Oil and which was reviewed by the JRP and the NEB in order to identify possible gaps and to encourage recommendations from the other project proponents. The separate yet interconnected public hearing process conducted by

[97] In the Environmental Impact Review, the term environment is defined as it follows: 'the components of the Earth and includes: a) land, water and layers of the atmosphere; b) all organic and inorganic matter and living organisms; and c)the interacting natural systems that include components referred to in (a) and (b)'. In addition, the Review would consider 'impact to the environment' anything affecting 'health and socioeconomic conditions, (…) physical and cultural heritage, (…) current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by aboriginal persons, or (…) any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archeological, paleontological or architectural significance'.
[98] Gina Dolphus, Barry Greenland, Percy Hardisty, Rowland Harrison, Robert Hornal, Tyson Pertschy, Peter J. Usher.

the JRP and the NEB was initiated officially in 2006. On 14 February, 2006, the JRP hearings were launched in Inuvik, NWT.

The JRP Hearings (2006-2007)

The JRP hearings were held in twenty-six communities and lasted for more than a hundred days, producing over eleven thousand pages of transcripts. Many of the towns where the hearings took place were the same ones where thirty years earlier, Judge Thomas Berger had been collecting the testimonies of aboriginal chiefs, women and elders. Many of those who had testified at the Berger Inquiry, including famous leaders such as Stephen Kakfwi and Frank T'Seleie, participated also at the JRP hearings, where they revived many old concerns.

The indigenous testimonies that I am going to analyze in this chapter should therefore be seen as in strict connection and continuity with those presented during the Berger Inquiry. Once again, my attention has been drawn in particular (yet not solely) to the hearings held in Sahtu Dene communities - such as those of Fort Good Hope, Deline and Tulita. Here, old and new voices have gathered and entered (or re-entered) the pipeline negotiations. The ultimate goal of this analytical chapter is to explore and discuss how representations and understandings of space and time are influenced by or, conversely, actively contesting the newly established bureaucratic framework. For this reason, a comparison between the JRP hearings and the experience of the Berger Inquiry, although not always explicitly, is nevertheless going to materialize more than once. As it will be shown, the Inquiry returns persistently during the JRP hearings through the stories and the memories of those who spoke in front of Berger and who now, suddenly, find themselves part of a whole different setting. For all of them, something is gained and something is inevitably lost in this brand-new space of negotiation.

7.2. 'Times have changed'

> I know back in the Berger days -- Berger days when I was just a young person then. I was just -- one man was sitting there and seen a lot of elders speaking out. This bring back memories. Like a lot of these elders have passed on today, and very true what they spoke about those days, very true today is happening. Times have changed. A lot of things have changed. Like today -- they didn't have those on the screen when Berger days now. You could see the change that happening with us. And now I talk with a few people -- I still trap on the land, do a lot of these things. Our

> land was very valuable to us. Our elders always say land, animal, and water is very important to us, but time have changed with us. -Mayor Yakeleya (Tulita)[99]
>
> Sometimes, it's really hard for us to make speeches because, as youths and elders, we're not used to the formal Panel doing the protocol in line with making discussions. It's hard for the elders. They don't understand the -- therefore, it's really hard to -- for them to make speeches along that line. I say that because Imperial Oil has tons of material for us to read, and it's really hard for us to understand that. There's no funds set aside for us to have a community workshop on the materials that's presented to us. We've been through tons of materials, yet we have a hard time understanding the materials that are before each community. We don't have the expertise. We don't have the technical help that is required to understand each material.
> -Bobby Clement (Tulita)[100]

In this excerpt from his speech, Mayor Gordon Yakeleya recalls the memory of his participation at the Berger Inquiry as a young member of the Dene community in Tulita. Two sets of temporally-situated terms configure the two different, yet interwoven temporalities of the past and the present. Part of the first set are terms such as 'Then', 'the Berger days' and 'those days', while part of the second are 'this', 'today' and 'now'. Interestingly, together with the temporal parallel between past and present, also a generational one emerges. At the time of the Berger Inquiry, in fact, the speaker was 'just a young person' witnessing 'a lot of elders speaking out'. By making a differentiation between young and old participants, Yakeleya is endowing the two groups with different degrees of authority. This is made evident if we look at the aspect of *transitivity*[101] (Fairclough, 1989, 120-123). The speaker puts in fact himself - the young person - in charge uniquely of behavioral ('sitting') and mental ('seen') processes, while the elders are in charge of verbal ones ('speaking out'). Although not diminishing the value of his experience at the Berger Inquiry, Yakeleya delineates, within few lines, a specific generational hierarchy, which is further reinforced through the use of antithesis ('one man' vs. 'a lot of elders').

In the 1970s, the elders voiced their concerns in front of Judge Berger and made predictions on what would happen in the future if the construction of the pipeline was allowed to

[99] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 4 April 2006, Vol. 17, 1723, 7-18.
[100] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 4 April 2006, Vol. 17, 1745, 28-39.
[101] See footnote 70 for an explanation of the term.

proceed. Thirty years later, Yakeleya emphasizes that many of these predictions have indeed turned into reality. Looking once again at transitivity, the renewed importance of the elders' role is stressed through the shift from verbal ('what they *spoke* those days') to existential process ('very true today is *happening*'). Their words were not just some abstract predictions. They became facts.

The difference between the informal nature of the Berger Inquiry and the more procedural one of the JRP hearings is further emphasized in the testimony of Bobby Clement. Clement complains about the inaccessibility of much of the material presented at the JRP hearings. By doing so, he exposes the selective character of the latter, which, in spite of promoting local participation, end up limiting any effective contribution by community members, thus increasing alienation and isolation. In this sense, the challenge of reading and understanding huge amount of data is vividly conveyed through the use of rhetorical devices such as hyperboles ('tons of material') and through words with expressive values ('really hard') repeated multiple times.

Furthermore, at the grammar level, Clement shifts among different personal pronouns - 'we', 'they' and 'I' - to turn incommunicability and lack of access into issues affecting the whole community, and thus trespassing generational boundaries ('youths and elders'). His message is that no one, regardless of their role and authority, is able to navigate the technocratic language of the hearings, and that everyone is thus feeling equally discouraged and excluded. People's frustration regarding the newly established hearing process is expressed through a series of negative sentences[102], such as 'we are not used', 'they don't understand', 'there's no funds', 'we don't have the expertise' and 'we don't have the technical help'. The negative construction is here used to convey notions of absence and scarcity - of money, competences, understanding or all of them at once - in striking opposition with the extreme abundance of information ('tons of material') provided.

Eventually, local people's perception of their own role in the JRP hearings is also affected. Through the use of passive sentences ('materials that's presented to us'), Clement suggests that the Dene from Tulita see themselves as passive recipients of knowledge and rules created and

[102] What Halliday and Matthiessen (2013, p. 173) call 'negative polarity'.

enforced by someone else ('the formal Panel doing the protocol'; 'Imperial Oil has tons of material for us to read').

Discussion: A different time and space

In both testimonies, the past is mobilized in the present. This time, however, the past is not only the violent past of colonization or the nostalgic one of hunting and trapping in the bush; it is a more recent past of community participation, here symbolized by one key event, namely the Berger Inquiry. The Inquiry is evoked as a pivotal moment in which the Dene were finally given the opportunity to voice their concerns and to make specific requests. In this context, the elders' evocative storytelling found its most complete expression, being used both to share fundamental knowledge on the communities' way of life and, at the same time, to advance political claims. In Bobby Clement's testimony, it is suggested that the same storytelling is somehow constrained and limited by the structure of the JRP hearings, where participants are asked to fit their interventions in a rigid and schematic structure ('it's really hard to -- for them to make speeches along that line'). In contrast with the present format of the hearings, the experience of the Berger Inquiry is recalled in Mayor Yakeleya's speech as a positive and empowering example of community participation.

While recognizing the superior authority of the elders, Yakeleya is not presenting himself as a passive listener of someone else's testimony. In the Berger Inquiry he also played a fundamental role: he was there; and because of that, he can today remember how things went and compare the two experiences. *Remembering* emerges then here as a twofold activity: not only as a nostalgia-filled process of recollection, but as an extremely powerful act of reinterpretation. Through memory, the speaker acquires the capacity (and authority) to reinterpret the past in order to send a specific message in the present: things have changed and not for the better. Furthermore, by recollecting the past ('the Berger Days') and connecting it to the present ('today'), Yakeleya mobilizes a third temporal dimension, i.e. the 'meantime'. Stef Jansen (2016, p. 457) describes the meantime as 'suspended between a known past (experienced, and to a degree idealized) and a normative future (so far infuriatingly out of reach)'. In the case of Yakeleya's testimony, the one materializing is a different, yet extremely meaningful meantime, which is constituted by the period comprised between the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings (approximately thirty years). During these years, crucial decisions were taken, and many of the changes in the legislation and

models of community participation were introduced. The meantime between the two hearings is thus also a past and already experienced time, yet one whose particular events, while being left unsaid (Yakeleya never mentions what happened after the Berger Inquiry), have produced effects which are visible and relevant in the present.

Examining Yakeleya's testimony, it is worth to remark that it is not only the past to be mobilized in the present, but also the present to be mobilized in the past. Yakeleya recalls in fact the words of the elders during the Berger Inquiry and infuses them with a deeply prophetic value when he says: 'very true what they spoke about those days, very true today is happening'. The present is in fact configured as a "past-future prophecy", i.e. into a vision of the future which the elders predicted at the time of the Berger Inquiry (the past) and which has turned into reality (in the present). Carly Dokis (2015) observes, in this regard, how 'in very significant ways, the prophecies and prophet tradition continue to inform how Sahtu Dene people view their world and their place in it' (p. 52), and how, for this reason, the participation of the Sahtu in the hearings should not be seen as motivated by a wish to predict the future, but, rather, by other reasons transcending 'the interrogation and presentation of knowledge' (p. 53).

Although elders' predictions cannot be questioned and the present is indeed understood as a fulfilled prophecy, the simultaneous use of the present continuous ('the change that *happening*') might hint at a more unfinished and ongoing process. The present is in fact constructed as a time characterized by simultaneous dynamics of continuity and transformation. While local people are involved in the same activities and still rely upon the land for their material and spiritual well-being, there is also a renewed consciousness that their practices, strategies and (power) relations have changed and are still changing.

Yakeleya and Clement's testimonies communicate a fundamental message: not only times have changed, but the *space-time* of the hearings has changed as well. Thirty years after the evocative speeches delivered in the community halls across the NWT, where men, women and kids, would gather to listen to the stories told at the Berger Inquiry, the JRP hearings are held in a formal and abstract space which local people struggle to identify as familiar. While Judge Berger used to begin every session by welcoming all the participants and expressing his wish to hear from everyone without distinction, Robert Hornal, the Chairman of the Joint Review Panel, set some

specific rules for the participants to follow, including the speech pace[103]: 'I ask that when you give a presentation, you give your name, you speak slowly for the benefit of the interpreters, and that you use the table in front of us to speak to'[104]. Among the other things, the two rounds of community hearings differ substantially in one specific aspect: time management. If at the Berger Inquiry, time was indeed managed, but rather fluidly and without too strict limitations[105], during the JRP hearings, time is rigidly scheduled. In this regard, the following set of instructions given by Chairman Hornal during the session in Fort Good Hope (2006) is particularly revelatory of this new way of articulating time:

> We'll be coming back at 6:30, and we'll be going till 9:30, and we'll then return tomorrow for discussions between 1:30 and 4:30 and 6:30 and 9:30.[106]

A rigid time management as the one abovementioned can be seen as the manifestation of the increasingly techno-bureaucratic dimension acquired by the community hearings. By allowing the participants to speak only in their assigned time slot, by attempting to control their speech pace and by asking them to repeat their questions, *time* management becomes indeed an instrument of *people* management (Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen 2014, 2016, 2018; Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2015).

7.3. 'Our land is important to us'

> I've been on the land all my life, and I'm still living off the land, even though I get pension (…) You know, this is our land, and us elders, we are really concerned about our land. You know, the industries have made our lands like a cross, and we have to bear it. So there's the trees, willows, everything that is being destroyed by industries (…) When we say "our land", it's our land because we grew up on the land. (…) Money brings a lot of destruction: alcohol, drugs. So money brings all that destruction.
>
> -Gabe Kochon (Fort Good Hope)[107]

[103] In every community hall, hanging from the Joint Review Panel's table was a sign reading "Speak Slowly" (Dokis, 2015).
[104] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2020, 28-29.
[105] Berger used to say: 'I want to tell you we have lots of time' (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 2 April 1975, Vol. 1, p. 3, 7).
[106]JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2050, 12-13.
[107] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2059, 32-33, 38-42; 2060, 13, 36.

> We're not looking forward to that, if there's no more fish, no more caribou, no more moose and birds. If the oil company provide us a billion dollars, that you can use this billion dollars, but that billion dollars cannot create a fish. A billion dollar cannot create a moose. And billions and billions of dollars cannot create any other animals.
> -Charlie Neyelle (Deline)[108]

The testimonies of Gabe Kochon in Fort Good Hope and Charlie Neyelle in Delíne are meant to represent the point of view of the elders, who once again recall Dene's historical connection to the land and anticipate the risks posed by uncontrolled development and lack of consent.

In the extract from his speech, Gabe Kochon, besides reviving many of the concerns expressed during the Berger Inquiry, uses a similar terminology to describe his relationship with the land[109]. As other participants before him, he also proudly states that he has spent a life 'on the land' ('I've been on the land all my life'; 'we grew up on the land') as well as 'off the land' ('I'm still living off the land'). Yet, interestingly, he immediately makes a clarification, by adding another clause ('even though I've got a pension'), which he connects to the beginning of the sentence through the conjunction/connector 'even though'. Drawing upon what Fairclough writes in *Language and Power* (p. 129-131), such construction signals a specific awareness from the speaker, namely that the word 'pension' might be interpreted in striking opposition with the word 'land', and that the two sentences - 'I'm living off the land' and 'I get a pension' - might indeed result contradictory. For this reason, Kochon feels the urge to clarify from the very beginning that the fact that he is receiving a pension has not affected his relationship with the land. Rather, this relationship is threatened by other external factors. Throughout the extract, Kochon maintains in fact the dichotomy *us vs. them*, and blames the industry and the government for acting without the communities' consent. Contrary to the intrusive 'others', the Dene are identified as the rightful owners of the land (see in this regard the repetition of 'we' and 'our'); a status which derives from the land's active occupancy and use.

As a brief *transitivity analysis* helps to point out, the Dene are mostly associated with existential and behavioral processes ('I have been on the land'; 'we grew up on the land', 'this is

[108] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 3 April 2006, Vol. 16, 1645, 13-17.
[109] See the previous chapter for a more elaborate explanation of what it means for the Dene to live 'off', 'on' and 'with' the land.

our land'), which are used to convey factuality, reliance and authority. Kochon and the other elders emerge thus as victims of a deeply unfair treatment: while they should be the only ones in charge, their position is instead constantly threatened by "outsiders", who do not know anything about the land and yet, want to govern it ('they come in with their paper and tell us: this is what we want you to do'). As a result, the land, which in the other testimonies was compared to 'a friend', 'a mother' or 'ourselves' becomes in Kochon's testimony 'a cross (…) we have to bear'. Through this powerful metaphor, it is implied that, while still an object of care and a fundamental source of material and spiritual survival, the land itself has also undergone a profound transformation, whose consequences are now faced by the Dene.

In a similar fashion, Charlie Neyelle, an elder from Deline, argues in his testimony that the economic benefits deriving from the pipeline will be worthless if the same pipeline will force the animals to move away from their habitat. Through a series of repetitions ('billion dollars cannot create…') and hyperboles ('billions and billions') he makes it clear that regardless of how much income will be generated, this will never be enough to balance the disappearance of local species. By bringing the animals (and not only humans) into the discussion, Neyelle is configuring an opposition between two worldviews: the Dene one, who considers animals integral part of a larger cosmology, and a non-indigenous corporate one - here embodied by the 'oil company' - which prioritizes economic development over biodiversity and cultural survival.

The central importance of the land for Dene communities, and the threat posed by 'money' to the Dene-land relationship are some of the themes explored by young Paul T'Seleie in his testimony.

> You see, money is not the solution. It's us. You got to understand that this world is more important than money. It's like our land is important to us (…) This is my land. This is where we come from. Like we said earlier, it is genocide to take that away from us. We're going in a transition right now and money is not the solution. Opportunity is not the solution. I'm sorry to say that (…) Did they do the same things in the south, give them all these opportunities? Did they do that to the Indians in the south? No. No, they got problems. And money was part of that problem. And money is a problem here in the community. Young people sell drugs because they need money in order to eat and survive because there's no jobs. The same thing with bootlegging. I don't blame them. Absolutely. It's a social problem. It's among us. It's going to be among -- it's

> going to come in the future (…) What if something happens to the earth? Where are you going to go? Where are you going to turn to? Where are you going to run? Where are you going to hide? Are you going to hide under all the money that you guys made, money that will seem - money that will be useless in the future, useless to Mother Nature? So I'll leave that question for you guys.
> -Paul T'Seleie (Fort Good Hope)[110]

Paul T'Seleie is the nephew of that Frank T'Seleie, who, thirty years earlier, fiercely opposed the pipeline, and inflamed the audience at Fort Good Hope with his speech[111] in front of Judge Berger. From the first lines of his testimony to the Panel, Paul T'Seleie asserts that he will not take a position regarding the project ('I'm not going to say that I'm against it or with it'[112]). Rather, his support goes uniquely to his people, and for this reason, he often emphasizes that his words should be treated as a recommendation rather than as a final statement.

In the extract which I have selected, terms like 'land' and 'world' are placed in opposition to 'money'. The combination of these words into sentences serves to construct a specific hierarchy, where 'money' is given a much lower status than 'land/world' ('this world is more important than money', 'our land is important to us'). Furthermore, the *land vs. money* opposition is reinforced by means of a parallel dichotomy, namely 'problem' vs. 'solution'. T'Seleie observes in fact that, while 'money' is often considered a quick fix to solve many of the issues affecting the communities, the very existence of these issues should be blamed on the sudden flows of capital, and on the easy and uncontrolled earnings associated with megaprojects. To counteract this situation, he urges his people to acknowledge that change will depend uniquely from them ('money is not the solution. It's us'), and from their ability to safeguard the land and honor the relationship they have with it.

To unfold his argument that money is more a problem than a solution, T'Seleie skillfully shifts from declarative to *grammatical question mode* (Fairclough, 125-126). In this sense, he asks a

[110] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2077, 28-29, 35-40; 2078, 8-15; 2079, 3-8.
[111] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18.
[112] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2077, 9.

series of yes/no questions[113] ('Did they do the same things in the south, give them all these opportunities? Did they do that to the Indians in the south?'), to which he eventually gives himself a negative answer ('No. No, they got problems'). Rather than real questions, those posed by T'Seleie acquire the character of rhetorical questions, used to engage polemically with the audience, and to make his argument sound more like commonsense - and thus harder to confute. In the final part of the extract, T'Seleie privileges again the grammatical question mode, this time through a series of *wh*-questions[114] ('What if something happens to the earth? Where are you going to go? Where are you going to turn to? Where are you going to run? Where are you going to hide?') and a final *yes/no* question ('Are you going to hide under all the money that you guys made, money that will seem - money that will be useless in the future, useless to Mother Nature?') which he directs to his listeners ('So I'll leave that question for you guys'). The succession of questions with the same repeated incipit ('where are you going to') contributes to creating an atmosphere of unease and anxiety. Worth to notice is also the choice of verbs like 'go', 'turn to', 'run' and 'hide', which evoke the image of someone who is lost, who has missed every point of reference and is desperately trying to find refuge - potentially, from an imminent evil. The very last question, again a rhetorical one, reiterates the 'money vs. land' opposition, this time by stressing the uselessness of 'money' when the natural order has been irremediably compromised.

Discussion: money *out of* the land or money *from* the land?

The three testimonies share a focus on the relationship between 'land' and 'money'. Gabe Kochon, Charlie Neyelle and Paul T'Seleie all construct this moral relationship in oppositional terms. While the land is considered a source of knowledge and sustenance, or in other words, of both material and spiritual wellbeing for the Dene, money is considered only a source of destruction and despair. Extractive megaprojects like the MVP are often presented as huge opportunities of development and growth, but what, according to the speakers, many fail to see is the damage that they cause to aboriginal livelihoods. In this regard, Kochon states that 'the trees, the willows, everything that is being destroyed by the industries', while T'Seleie observes that the ongoing process of land dispossession is 'genocide'. All three speakers understand and

[113] Questions which start with a verb and often entail a yes/no answer.
[114] Questions starting with *what, when, where, who, whom, which, whose* or *why* and which entail a more detailed answer than a yes/no.

construct ‘money’ as something external, alien to the land, which has been slowly insinuating in the communities and increasing their dependence upon the government and the industries. This understanding of money is cross-generational: while Kochon and Neyelle belong to a generation of elders who experienced the Berger Inquiry in their younger days, T’Seleie is a young member of the K'Ahsho Got'ine community who is nevertheless directly connected to a former chief and elder (Frank T’Seleie) through kinship.

Paul T’Seleie is aware that his young age might constitute an obstacle, and thus seeks to constantly raise his ethos by multiple intertextual moves[115] (Fairclough, 1992b). In addition, while placing his speech in continuation with what others before him have said (‘like we said earlier’), he also “elevates” it and extends it to all those people who did not personally get the opportunity to voice their concerns. To this collectivity he presents himself as a spokesperson (‘and I'll speak for thousands of people that can't speak here today because they never got a chance to speak in this world’). The recourse to intertextuality is, in this sense, spatio-temporally significant in two ways. *First*, it contributes to broadening the arena of negotiation. Suddenly, it is not only the young Paul T’Seleie to speak, but his family, the ‘Indians in the south’, the participants at the Berger Inquiry, and all the victims of Western colonization whose claims have long been silenced. *Secondly*, the use of temporal locatives (‘earlier’, ‘years ago’, ‘today’) makes Paul T’Seleie’s testimony relevant across a very broad timespan. Once again, as I previously pointed out in my analysis of the Berger Inquiry, Dene participants are particularly skilled at *upscaling* the context, by weaving together past, present and future within the same testimony. T’Seleie’s argument, namely that unregulated capital accumulation will only bring destruction to the land and the communities, is presented as directly linked to the past, and concretely backed both by other testimonies (at the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings) and similar experiences of failed development (the South).

At the same time, it is not only the past to be mobilized here, but also the present and the future. T’Seleie in fact refers to the situation of young people in his community who have undertaken illegal activities (e.g. drug dealing, bootlegging) as a reaction to the lack of jobs. Such activities

[115] He acknowledges older members of his family, both at the beginning of the testimony (‘I would like to recognize my granny at home listening right now’) and later when he refers to Frank T’Seleie’s opposition to the pipeline (‘I could say that because my uncle stopped it years ago’).

trap young community members into a vicious circle, which, through the prospect of easy gains, precludes them from exploring any alternative path. This is why T'Seleie urges for a prompt response in the present. At the beginning of his testimony, he states 'we are going through a transition'. The word 'transition' is here pivotal, as it configures the present as more than a moment suspended between a "now" and an "after", but as a fundamental phase of change. As previously observed for Mayor Yakeleya's testimony - where Yakeleya warns 'you could see the change that happening with us' - in the same way, Paul T'Seleie's use of the concept of transition is one which emphasizes the actuality of change, but also the uncertainty of results. Rather than a linear and neat process of transformation, 'transition' is configured here as a much more open-ended path, which can lead to very different outcomes[116]. In this case, I argue, 'transitioning' should not necessarily be interpreted as a synonym of *growing up/progressing*, but, rather, of *becoming*, and thus entailing a fundamental freedom of choice within change. Because the Dene are transitioning, all paths are now open to them, with or without fossil fuels.

With regard to the Dene transition, both Paul T'Seleie and the other two speakers share the idea that 'money' would only threaten it, and thus invite to focus on the land as the only element of security and continuity, which is going to guide the Dene into the future. At the same time, other Dene participants at the JRP hearings construct the relationship between 'land' and 'money' in non-oppositional terms. For instance, former Dene chief Stephen Kakfwi, who opposed the pipeline during the Berger Inquiry[117], and testifies again, almost thirty years later, at the JRP hearings. Here, he urges for a true recognition of aboriginal ownership of the land, and thus of the fundamental right to benefit from natural resource revenues:

> Not a gift, not a benevolent payment, not core funding, not grants, not contributions, but revenue from the resources of our own land to provide for ourselves (…) I think the day when Canada gives us what is rightfully ours, which is a shared revenue from the resources of this land, then you will see First Nations truly become strong and self-reliant once again. But we will never do it with all the gifts that are given to us by the governments of this country.[118]

[116] Paul T'Seleie's use of the word 'transition' becomes in my opinion particularly emblematic. He is in fact undergoing himself an important transition, namely the one from young to adult member of the community.
[117] Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 6 August 1975, Vol. 19.
[118] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, Vol. 23, 2126, 2-4, 21-24.

While many Dene participants at the JRP hearings distinguish money and land as two separate and potentially irreconcilable entities, Stephen Kakfwi brings them together, and argues for a fundamental shift which can be summarized as: from keeping "money *out of* the land" to making "money *from* the land". In his testimony, he does not warn against money in general, but only against that specific kind which is used to govern the communities - namely, what he refers to as 'gift', 'benevolent payment', 'core funding', 'grants', 'contributions'. Against the subjugation of this externally generated money, Kakfwi proposes a new model, which relies upon generating profits directly from the land and. Resource revenues from the land are invested by Kakfwi with a different kind of value, which derives from Dene's rightful and continuous occupation of the land ('what is rightfully ours'), and which eventually makes such revenues a more just, legitimate and empowering source of income than government concessions.

7.4. 'We were not given the time and space'

> I brought the *Sahtu Atlas*. I brought some of my thoughts. I brought a map put out by the Pembina Institute, just for comparisons (…) Between these two maps that I have, the traditional and the Pembina especially the density of the development that is projected 30 years hence, shows the amount of stress on the land, on the animals, on the plants and on the people. And it shows a critical lack of we, as a people, where we are today, where we want to go. Between these two, we really don't have a qualified map based on where we want to go because, as the speaker before me pointed out, the Sahtu land use map plan is not complete (…) We were not given the time and space because we were too busy -- as Lucy Jackson said earlier today, this afternoon, too busy reacting to what other people were saying that -- that they have plans about and then we have to react[119].
>
> -Addy Tabac (Fort Good Hope)

In 2001, while proposals for the Mackenzie Gas Project were being presented, a group of Sahtu GIS partners developed the idea of producing an Atlas 'with the aim of sharing the collective knowledge about this region'. The Sahtu Atlas, which was completed four years later in 2005, contained several maps of the Sahtu region, which, in the first lines of the introduction to the Atlas, was defined as a place famous for its cultural heritage, landscape and natural resources.

[119] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, vol. 23, p. 2161, 24-25; p. 2162, 38-43; p. 2163, 1-2, 10-12.

Addy Tabac, a member of the K'asho Got'ine community, brought a copy of the Sahtu Atlas together with a map from the Pembina Institute to the JRP hearings held at the K'ahsho Got'ine Council Community Hall in Fort Good Hope. In her speech[120], Tabac highlights the lacunas of the two maps, which, according to her, fail to give a clear image of the Dene as people.

Drawing upon John Brian Harley's considerations on the power of maps (1988), in Chapter 4, I have often mentioned the "silencing" of the map, referring with this term to the more or less hidden system of hierarchies and omissions that maps contribute to reproducing. In this regard, it is particularly interesting to focus on what, according to Tabac, the two maps show (or do not show). The maps, and especially the one from the Pembina institute, anticipate thirty years of intense development, which is expected to have huge impacts not only on the Sahtu communities, but also on the flora and fauna of the region. In this sense, rather than just *describing* the map's technical content, Tabac *interprets* the latter in terms of its environmental and social implications for the region. Specifically, by emphasizing the maps' 'proleptic' ability (Sparke, 1998) to anticipate what they otherwise only seem to represent, Tabac argues that the negative impacts of oil and gas development on the Sahtu region are indeed already visible from the two maps ('shows the amount of stress on the land, on the animals, on the plants and on the people'). While a map cannot obviously show 'stress' - which is usually perceived as a mental, emotional or physical strain - it can still give stress a visual dimension, for instance, as in this case, by displaying the spatial extent and/or the pace of transformations in a given area.

When referring again to both maps, and in particular to the map from the Pembina Institute, Tabac states that the latter 'shows a critical lack of we, as a people, where we are today, where we want to go'. I find the choice of words in this sentence extremely interesting. In fact, rather than opting for a negative construction (i.e. rather than saying "the map does not show us, as a people…"), Tabac links the sentence with the previous one through the same positive construction ('it shows'). The result, namely 'the map *shows* a *lack*', is an antonymic combination of words, which, once again, hints at maps' ability to make the invisible (the 'not there') highly visible.

[120] The extracts here reported constitute only a very small part of Addy Tabac's speech, which can be consulted in its entirety in A. Tabac, JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, vol. 23, pp. 2161-2168.

Finally, the fundamental knowledge gap which Tabac identifies in the two maps is later in the testimony attributed to the general mood of urgency and excitement characterizing the previous years, where the discussion on the pipeline somehow "distracted" the Dene from other - potentially more important - issues. In this regard, after making an intertextual connection to another testimony ('as Lucky Jackson said earlier today'), Tabac denounces a fundamental lack of 'time and space' for the Dene to take their own decisions. The combination of negative and passive constructions in the sentence ('*we were not given* time and space') contributes to reproducing the image of Dene as mere recipients of someone else's choices.

Discussion: on a map which is not complete

Between 1974 and 1976, during the years of the Berger Inquiry, Phoebe Nahanni and other Dene community members started a mapping project[121] to trace Dene land-based activities. The project, which was meant to support the Dene in their land claim negotiations, was deeply collaborative and, over the course of two years, saw the participation of several hunters and trappers, who were observed and interviewed by Dene researchers (McCall, 2011, pp. 54-56). In August 1975, Phoebe Nahanni brought the maps of the *Mapping Project* to the Berger Inquiry, and specifically, at a community hearing in Trout Lake, NWT. She showed Berger the different trails and traplines depicted on the map as evidences of Dene extensive past and present land use and occupancy. As she later stated in the Mapping Project's report (Watkins, 1977, p. 27), 'this is the most graphic demonstration of the truth that we Dene own 450,000 square miles of land'.

The fact that another Dene community member, Addy Tabac, also chooses to bring maps at a public hearing, this time in Fort Good Hope, and almost thirty-one years after Phoebe Nahanni's testimony at the Berger Inquiry, is in my opinion suggestive of that 'narrative power' (Caquard and Cartwright, 2014) that maps undoubtedly have, as well as of their political significance. Drawing upon my previous considerations on the role of cartography in resource development[122], I argue that while Nahanni and Tabac both use the map as a tool to make claims, they also do so

[121] For more information on *The Mapping Project*, see the team's report written by Phoebe Nahanni and reprinted in Watkins et al. (1977), Dene Nation - The Colony Within, pp. 22-27.
[122] See Chapter 4.

in very different ways: the first, Nahanni, by engaging with *presence* (i.e. with what the map actually shows), and the other one, Tabac, with *absence* (i.e. with what the map does not show).

While Phoebe Nahanni presents herself to Berger as a map producer (or at least as one of them), Tabac is instead a map reader who brings two maps[123] in front of the JRP Panel - the Sahtu Atlas and a map from the Pembina Institute - which she has not contributed to producing in first person. Nevertheless, during her testimony, it becomes increasingly clear that Tabac is much more than a passive reader, and rather, one who actively interprets (instead of merely describing) the content of the map. Besides some concrete information on the 'development' that the maps predict[124], Tabac emphasizes that the implications of this development are going to be destructive for the Dene, the land, the animals and the plants. Although the infrastructures shown in the maps are not physically there yet, what are instead perceived and evoked as extremely present are the dramatic consequences that such infrastructures are going to have on the community.

In Chapter 4, I have pointed out how maps of the North have often represented the latter as an empty space in-the-waiting, ready to be conquered, named and demarcated. In these maps, absence served a specific function that transcended representation, and was instead inherently political: namely, to encourage the occupation of Northern lands and the progressive exploitation of natural resources. The maps presented by Addy Tabac during the JRP hearings are maps which are important *because of* their gaps. What the maps do not show - or, quoting Tabac, 'show a lack of' - is once again the Dene as people, with their collective plans, visions and ambitions. This absence, which directly affects the mobilization of the Dene as a nation, is interestingly charged with a spatio-temporal connotation. Rather than *who* they are, the maps fail to show *where* they are now and *where* they are going, implying both a lack of present awareness (of their role and priorities here and now) and of future direction (of what they want to achieve). Tabac's choice of terms, I suggest, can be thus examined by reflecting on the importance of *scale* in connection to map-making. While, more often than not, maps are involved in the production

[123] It is necessary to remark that Addy Tabac brings in fact three maps at the hearing, namely the Sahtu Atlas, a map from the Pembina Institute and what she refers to as 'a map put out by National Geographic'. However, throughout the testimony, she consistently refers to only two of them - the Sahtu Atlas and the Pembina map - and therefore, my analytical attention has also been directed towards the latter.

[124] In the map from the Pembina institute, Tabac points at 'the density of all the oil wells and drills and roads and everything that will be there'.

of *geographic* scales (local/global; city/region/nation), in Tabac's testimony, maps are attributed the power to mobilize different *temporal* scales (present and future), and together with these, also the specific identities which are formed within these scales (the Dene now, the Dene in the future).

With reference to the mobilization of absence in Tabac's testimony, it is also worth to notice that, in addition to the maps that she brings to the hearings, Tabac refers to another map (or more precisely, a collection of maps), which, in her words, 'is not complete', namely the Sahtu Land Use Plan[125]. The map is expected to fill the gap between the Sahtu Atlas and the map from the Pembina Institute, by allowing the Dene to be directly involved in the planning of different land use activities. For this reason, the Sahtu Land Use Plan, both for its inherent future orientation - as a plan, it already implies some kind of forward thinking - and for its essential feature of incompleteness (i.e. as a "not-there-yet map"), is infused with a particular significance directly resulting from its absence. Although still more an object of speculation than a concrete reality, at least at the time of the JRP hearings, the Plan's prospect maps are evoked in the testimony as the necessary bridge between the two existing - but still deficient - maps.

At the same time, the remarks on the Plan's absence/incompleteness are also strategically used in order to support a parallel argument, namely that of *wasted time*. What I have attempted to emphasize so far is that, through the maps introduced during Tabac's testimony, questions of space and time are once again brought together, and used to introduce and frame broader political, social and cultural issues. Tabac blames today's lack of a more comprehensive map on past years of distractions and empty promises. By complaining that her people 'were not given time and space', what she denounces is that the Dene were deprived of the opportunity to create and manage their *own* time and space, in the sense of taking their own decisions and making their own plans for the future. It is implied that while '[they] were too busy reacting to what other people were saying', other chances were missed, and serious social issues now affecting the communities were not promptly tackled. Through her words, Tabac exposes the particular temporality (and temporal politics) of *reaction*, which has characterized the years following the Berger Inquiry, and which I am going to explore in the following paragraph.

[125] The Plan will indeed be completed in the years ahead and finally published in 2013.

7.5. 'A scene of reacting'

> Do you realize this has been a gruelling three to four years nonstop process around the clock, strenuous activity on the First Nations of this community, on pipeline, mining, negotiations? It has been anything but a high stress, exhausting years (…) It has been anything but a scene of reacting, reacting to major issues, and we were expected to make decisions on the spot literally. This is where we were caught in most cases.
> -Lucy Jackson (Fort Good Hope)[126]

> We are also challenged by the relentless activities of progress by governments, industry, technology, and the quest to fulfill the need and desire for security, resources, wealth, power, energy, and viable economic bases. This relentless activity causes a great deal of change and stress for us, not just in the physical sense, but psychologically and emotionally. We are forced to deal with change; change we have no control over.
> -Henry Tobac (Fort Good Hope)[127]

> And I hope the Panel Members understand that this is what they dragged us through, the stress that they cause us, the break-up of families, and the pipeline hasn't even started yet.
> -James Grandjambe (Fort Good Hope)[128]

As already done by Addy Abac in her testimony, also Lucy Jackson, Henry Tobac and James Grandjambe from Fort Good Hope suggest in their speeches that the prospect of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline has, over the years, generated a particular way not only of expecting the future, but of experiencing the present.

At the beginning of the extract from Lucy Jackson's speech, we can notice a succession of words with expressive value ('*grueling* three to four years', '*nonstop* process', '*strenuous* activity'; '*high* stress'; '*exhausting* years'), which are used to convey feelings of anxiety and pressure. Similarly, Henry Tobac employs twice the adjective 'relentless' to describe the activities which have been promoted by major pipeline stakeholders (e.g. government and industry), and which have made the years of the MVP negotiations extremely busy for the communities. In this

[126] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, Vol. 23, 2108, 14-16, 39-41.
[127] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, Vol. 23, 2121, 27-33.
[128] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, Vol. 23, 2174, 15-18.

regard, all three speakers use the word 'stress' in their testimonies to refer to the negative impacts of the pipeline negotiations on the Dene's psychological and emotional wellbeing. 'Stress' and 'change' are in Henry Tobac's testimony coupled as two interconnected consequences of the continued pursuit of goals such as 'security, resources, wealth, power, energy, and viable economic bases'. Similarly, in the extract from James Grandjambe's testimony, 'stress' is linked to phenomena of community fragmentation[129] and destruction ('the break-up of families'). Besides more generically on the 'government', stress is blamed directly on the system of community consultation, here exemplified by the Joint Review Panel, which, instead of actively promoting the participation of communities in the projects, isolates them by perpetuating knowledge gaps and unequal distribution of economic benefits.

Two of the speakers - Lucy Jackson and James Grandjambe - opt for a less accusatory tone to denounce the government's responsibility for the increasing distress suffered by the communities. In this sense, while addressing the Panel, Jackson uses the *grammatical question mode* ('Do you realize this has been…?'), and Grandjambe chooses a more cautious and apparently polite opening ('I hope you understand'). The latter, however, when combined with the rest of the sentence, makes Grandjambe's intervention emerge as a subtler, yet no less strong accusation to the Panel. In this regard, it is also worth to mention that while in both the sentences used by Jackson and Grandjambe, the verbs are linked to the sphere of thinking/comprehension ('realize', 'understand')[130], because of the way the sentences are introduced - as a yes/no question and as a warning - it is implied that the subject ('you') does indeed *not* realize or understand the extent of the damage caused.

The divide between speakers and listeners is further accentuated by the recurrence of passive sentences. In all three testimonies, speakers make consistent use of the passive form ('we were expected', 'we were caught'; 'we are challenged', 'we are forced') or configure themselves as the recipients of someone else's actions ('what they dragged us through'). By doing so, the Dene

[129] In this regard, earlier in the testimony, Grandjambe says: 'All these different groups have caused many hardship, many -- a great deal of stress and have broken up the community itself into ten different small little groups. There are some leaders in this room that haven't spoken to me for the last three months. That's the kind of stress that we have to put up with.' (2172, 20-23).
[130] From the dimension of transitivity, 'realize' and 'understand' hint at *mental* processes, whose participant is in both cases the generic 'you' mentioned in both testimonies.

position themselves as the victims of an unbalanced power relationship, which, as I am going to discuss in the next paragraph, is actively maintained by government and industry through an extremely demanding and hectic time management.

Discussion: on reacting and not moving. The spatio-temporal politics of reaction and immobility

If the acceleration of time has been identified by many (Bauman, 2013; Koselleck, 2004; Virilio, 2006) as a key characteristic of modernity, it also often emerges, even more evidently, within extractive contexts, where fragile and uncertain expectations on the future need to be constantly supported by rapid decisions in the present. Extractive endeavors have in fact the ability to trigger a series of interconnected temporal dispositions such as 'reaction', 'urgency' and 'anticipation', to which different degrees of action correspond. For this reason, I argue in this work for the necessity of seeing questions of power as directly connected with different understandings and productions of time. This means that that far from addressing 'anticipation' or 'reaction' as two affective states naturally emerging during the development of extractive megaprojects, I consider them, instead, as two temporal dispositions which are evoked in order to reproduce and sustain specific - and often unequal - power relations. In fact, while both 'anticipation' and 'reaction' can be framed within a hectic temporality of urgency, the *first* prompts active and, to a degree, organized planning, while the *second* only requires quick decisions, and thus not necessarily a full awareness of possible implications. In this regard, Adams, Murphy and Clarke (2009, p. 247) write that 'as an affective state, anticipation is not just a reaction, but a way of actively orienting oneself temporally'. The term 'actively' is crucial to understand the distinction between anticipation and reaction. In fact, differently from anticipation which entails to be well prepared for whatever may come, reaction is much more instinctive, and therefore, does not always entail a careful thinking about alternatives or consequences. For this reason, reaction is prompted to those who have already been assigned a secondary - and perhaps, more passive - role in a given plan.

Lucy Jackson, Henry Tobac and James Grandjambe all claim of not having been able to manage their time as they wished, because - continuously prompted to react - they have been forced to comply with someone else's temporal frameworks. Rather than them controlling time, time has been used to control them (Gasparini, 1995). The consequences of such a form of time

management are not uniquely those highlighted by the three speakers - such as stress, change and community fragmentation - but also a widespread feeling of what Ghassan Hage (2009) calls 'stuckedness'.

> Right now we're dealing with too many things. So we don't know which way to go because your pipeline is blocking us. We could do a lot of things for our community, but we're too busy with your pipeline.
> -Barthy Kotchile (Fort Good Hope) [131]

Hage describes 'stuckedness' as 'a situation where a person suffers from both the absence of choices or alternatives to the situation one is in and an inability to grab such alternatives even if they present themselves' (p. 4). 'Existential stuckedness' arises in opposition to 'existential mobility', i.e. to the 'sense that one is going somewhere' (p. 97). While existential and social/economic stuckedness might not necessarily coincide for Hage (i.e. one might climb up the social ladder and still feel stuck), in the Dene testimonies at the JRP hearings, both forms of stuckedness emerge, and are blamed on the specific form of time management enforced in the North. For this reason, I use here the term "spatio-temporal politics of reaction and immobility" to describe the hectic, compulsive and time-consuming practices of planning, negotiating and responding enforced by Canadian government and industry, and which, according to the participants mentioned in this section, have produced a fundamental consequence: immobilizing the Dene into *reactive* subjects and preventing them from being *productive* ones.

In his testimony, Barthy Kotchile from Fort Good Hope traces the cause of stuckedness in the pipeline itself ('your pipeline is blocking us'). Interestingly, although not physically there yet, the MVP becomes the material embodiment of the dense and chaotic complex of actors, policies and measures surrounding the project, and is vividly evoked by Kotchile in all its heavy and static materiality as an obstacle blocking the way. Through Kotchile's words, the pipeline is thus presented as an impediment to Dene self-determination, affecting people's (existential and material) mobility in two ways: namely, by preventing them both from moving forward and from moving around. The immobility caused by the pipeline is experienced by the Dene as a sense of lack of *future* direction ('we don't know which way to go'). The Dene feel that their future-

[131] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2065, 43; 2066, 1-4.

making capacity has been compromised through a constant limitation of opportunities; the pipeline has, for too long, been presented to them as the only future available and thus, as the only one for them to inhabit and to cope with. At the same time, immobility/stuckedness is also attributed to a lack of choices and alternatives in the *present* ('we could do a lot of things for our community'). While, as other testimonies have pointed out, several social issues were emerging and rapidly spreading through the communities[132], the Dene were 'too busy'[133] to tackle them in time. In addition, it is implied that, caught in the frenzy of rapid change, short-term achievements and quick decisions, the Dene have been "distracted", and this has resulted in the loss of many valuable opportunities. Eventually, 'stuckedness' translates here into the feeling that another kind of present (and future) would indeed be possible, if only externally imposed frameworks and activities were not constantly interfering, and precluding the Dene from finding their own pace and direction.

7.6. 'They made promises'

> History has also taught us in past development, like the Norman Wells/Zama pipeline. I can almost count on my fingers or on my hand the amount of people in the Sahtu that was directly involved in the employment aspects of that pipeline. And I strongly feel that it's going to happen again.
> -George Grandjambe (Fort Good Hope)[134]

> Since then, the time, they said they're going to give us -- they're going to give us a lot of jobs. I heard about that, too, when they told us back then, but now everything - things are still the same until this day (…) Back in 1921, they found oil in Norman Wells. Now it's 85 year -- 85 years since then. We don't even see once, and they don't sit here, not even today. We are still poor today. And now they're -- they're talking about another pipeline (…) Because you know what happened with the first pipeline. They made promises and promises and promises, and here it's running down. We're not benefiting nothing from it.
> -Morris Neyelle (Deline)[135]

[132] See Paul T'Seleie's testimony.
[133] Barry Kotchile uses a similar choice of words as Addy Tabac in the extract examined earlier.
[134] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2080, 6-9.
[135] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 3 April 2006, Vol. 16, 1634, 41-43; 1635, 33-35; 1637, 23-25.

> Next year we're back in here, we'll do that again. That's the impression that we get (…) The Norman Wells oil field has been operating for some 70 years. And, you know, Government of Canada settled -- we settled our claims over 10 years ago. They promised certain things from the Norman Wells proven area. Some of those promises haven't been met. (…) Broken promises from government and industry have always happened with First Nations people (…) I just want my people here, and everybody across the Northwest Territories or live over the radio, that, you know, it's good that the Joint Review Panel hears all our concerns an address it to the National Energy Board and Government of Canada, but, you know please keep in mind, at the end of the day, somebody else is going to make that decision for us.
> -Chief Pierrot (Fort Good Hope)[136]

The testimonies of George Grandjambe, Morris Neyelle and Chief Ron Pierrot all recall the memory of past projects in order to reveal the inconsistency of present promises. 'Promise' is indeed one of the keywords of the three extracts abovementioned, and is loaded by the participants with what Fairclough calls an 'experiential value'[137] (Fairclough, 1989, 112-116), i.e. a specific meaning deriving from the authors' own experiences. In this sense, both Neyelle and Pierrot give the word 'promise' a negative connotation, and emphasize the vacuity of the promises that have been made over the years; Neyelle, by using repetition ('They made promises and promises and promises'), and Pierrot, first by inserting the word 'promise' in a negative construction ('some of these promises haven't been met'), and later attaching a negative expressive value to it ('broken promises').

Furthermore, looking at the construction of the sentences in the three extracts, it is possible to notice a specific signposting which includes temporal adverbs ('today', 'since then', 'now', 'again') and locatives ('in past development like the Norman Wells/Zama pipeline', 'back in 1921'; '85 years since then', '10 years ago'). This signposting is used both to shift from the past to the present, and, at the same time, to establish a continuity between them. The past evoked is here one of other extractive endeavors, such as the drilling of Norman Wells and the construction of the Zama pipeline. As in the case of the MVP, these projects aroused the enthusiasm of

[136] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2045, 29-30; 2046,18-21, 41-42; 2048, 1-5.
[137] Fairclough defines *experiential* value as 'the way in which the text producer's experience of the natural and social world is represented' (p. 112). Experiential value has to do with 'contents, knowledge and beliefs' (ibid.). This implies that the choice of words in a text always reflects the author's worldview.

government and industry, which saw in the North an area of great economic potential, and thus made promises to Northern residents - as Neyelle recalls, 'they said (…) they're going to give us a lot of jobs' - in order to win their approval. However, since then, many of these promises have been disappointed, and the present reality does not look so different from the one of the early days of oil and gas development ('things are still the same until this day').

In Neyelle's testimony, in particular, the gap between promises/reality is emphasized through the dichotomy 'They' and 'we'. What a brief transitivity analysis points out is that 'they' is the participant in charge of mostly verbal processes ('they said', 'they told us', 'they're talking'), implying a rather vague and elusive mode of action, based more on words than facts. On the other hand, 'we' - i.e. the Dene - is configured as a weak participant, who is lacking of any authority, as hinted by the recurrence of mental/relational processes, and by the negative construction of the sentences ('we don't even see once'; 'we are still poor today', 'we're not benefitting nothing from it'). Furthermore, Neyelle establishes a powerful *intertextual* connection between the past and the present, by suggesting that current pipeline proposals ('now they're talking about another pipeline') mirror in fact early ones ('They told us back then').

Besides in order to expose the discrepancy between expectations and reality, past and present experiences and histories of development are mobilized in the testimonies to convey a fundamental warning, voiced by two of the three speakers: the future is already written and is not going to look any better. In this sense, while George Grandjambe reminds the lack of aboriginal participation in previous extractive projects as a warning sign of future failures (it's going to happen again'), Chief Pierrot emphasizes how the Dene are caught in a loop ('next year we're back, we'll do that again'). As the past has shown, the Dene are constantly compelled by government and industry into believing that their concerns and requests will be listened to, when in fact they have no authority whatsoever ('somebody else is going to make that decision for us'). Far from sounding like mere speculations, both Grandjambe and Pierrot's considerations on the future are presented as highly reasonable[138], and, as I am going to discuss further, foreseeing only one possible future: a future of disappointment.

[138] The use of the categorical modality of auxiliary 'will' helps increase plausibility, by describing a future which *will* materialize with a high degree of certainty.

Discussion: to be prepared…for disappointment

> It's better to be prepared than be sorry.
> -Chief Pierrot[139]

In the three testimonies reported in this section, past, present and future are once again intertwined by the speakers. The past, in particular, is remembered through the lens of those extractive infrastructures which, after the initial excitement, have failed to maintain the promises of aboriginal inclusion and empowerment. As pointed out by anthropologist Mark Nuttall (2014, pp. 284-285) in this regard,

> Cumulative and longitudinal effects of [previous] projects, but also the persistence of memories and narratives about them have also helped shape the ways in which indigenous peoples…think about, reflect upon and respond to current and planned development.

During the Berger Inquiry[140], Fred Rabisca and Robert Andre referred to the construction of the Trans-Alaska pipeline, and to the resource rush investing third world countries to warn against the consequences of rapid and uncontrolled development on the communities. Similarly, at the JRP hearings, George Grandjambe, Morris Neyelle and Chief Ron Pierrot recall the memory of extractive activities in the North - specifically, the oil drilling in Norman Wells and the building of the Zama Pipeline. Both these projects from the past are strategically mobilized in the present in order to show that very little has changed since then in terms of indigenous participation in resource development.

While "learning from the past" can be considered the common aim of the two experiences of recollection - the ones of the Berger Inquiry and those from the JRP hearings - the speakers' intentions behind their appeal to learn from past mistakes/disappointments are potentially very different in the context of the two community hearings. *On the one hand*, at the time of the Berger Inquiry, there was a general feeling among indigenous participants that much was still to be achieved in terms of rights and recognition, and that the future of the North was thus open to multiple possibilities. For this reason, Fred Rabisca and Robert Andre's references

[139] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 11 April 2006, Vol. 22, 2048, 36-37.
[140] F. Rabisca, Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 5 August 1975, Vol. 18; R. Andre, Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 13 March, 1976, Vol. 47.

to other development projects in Alaska and across third world countries could be read as attempts to prompt *anticipation*. Rebecca Bryant (2016) through her notion of the 'uncanny present', points out at the recalling of past memories[141] as a way of encouraging present intentionality, and namely of creating anticipation, where the latter is described as 'a mode of action in the present, one that shapes our present experience of the future' (p. 27). In the Berger Inquiry, the general mood is a very hopeful one. The majority of indigenous participants here believed (or at least showed to believe) that it was not too late to stop the pipeline, and that there was still time for the Dene to distinguish their history from that of other marginalized peoples. For this reason, the past was there evoked in order to suggest a specific strategy for the future, which, in order to be successful, had to be enacted "here and now" in the present.

At the JRP hearings, *on the other hand*, feelings of frustration, skepticism and disillusionment encompass many (although not all) Dene testimonies. Differently from the memories evoked by Andre and Rabisca at the Berger Inquiry, who both referred to "other" places (i.e. Alaska, third world countries), those of Grandjambe, Neyelle and Pierrot focus on development projects taking place in the heart of NWT, and sharing the character of unfulfilled promises. Through the words of the three witnesses, the past is connected to the present and to the future, in the sense of being perceived as a haunting presence - what Bryant (p. 26) calls the 'return' of the past - which insinuates in and burdens both the present and the future. The future, in particular, is implied to be one already doomed by the constant replication of past exclusionary practices and unfair behaviors ('I strongly feel it's going to happen again', 'next year…we'll do that again'). In this sense, the memory of past expectations, and the experience of a present where these expectations have been disappointed, and which is thus not substantially different from the past ('we are still poor today') give the speeches of the three participants at the JRP hearings a different significance and purpose compared to those delivered at the Berger Inquiry. As I interpret it, in fact, the recollection of the past, while still serving as a warning, is here underpinned by a much less proactive and mobilizing attitude, and rather than encouraging a different course of action, is instead meant to raise *awareness*. As made particularly evident in Chief Pierrot's speech ('you know please keep in mind, at the end of the day, somebody else is

[141] Bryant (2016, pp. 24-26) refers to 'return' and 'repetition' as two ways of experiencing the past in the uncanny present.

going to make that decision for us'), the past is remembered in order to trigger a specific kind of preparedness: namely, to be prepared for disappointment.

In this sense, differently from the Berger Inquiry, where the future was imagined as one of endless choices and opportunities, in the JRP hearings, the future is increasingly anticipated as an already written one, and furthermore, as a repetition of the past. For this reason, rather than in order to suggest an alternative path (than the one undertaken by other resource-rich countries), the past seems here to be evoked as a reminder that, regardless of all the promises, the hopes and the expectations, everything is eventually bound to stay the same.

7.7. 'We are ready for this project'

Premise

Throughout my analysis of the testimonies presented at the Berger Inquiry and at the JRP hearings, I have mostly focused on those testimonies evoking the memories, the practices and the expectations of the Dene people. As previously pointed out, since the 1970s the Dene have been going through a profound process of identity (trans)formation, exemplified by their efforts towards being recognized as a distinctive nation of people within Canada - namely, the Dene Nation. At the same time, together with the multiple examples of aboriginal political organizations already emerging at the end of the 1960s, the Inquiry became also the occasion thanks to which the Dene (e.g. Sahtu, Gwich'in, Dehcho) started to be increasingly connected with other aboriginal people of the Mackenzie Delta, including the Inuvialuit of the Canadian Arctic, with whom they shared many concerns, but also many strategic interests.

As I have attempted to briefly illustrate in the introduction to this chapter, the years after the Inquiry have been years of deep transformations, not only in terms of the relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal actors, but also of those among the different aboriginal communities - most of whom were now organized under so-called *comprehensive land claim agreements*. The long hiatus resulting from the 10-year moratorium on the MVP was broken in 2000 when Inuvialuit, Sahtu and Gwich'in leaders came together to create the APG, a consortium which was meant to represent the interests of the aboriginal people whose lands the

pipeline was to go through[142], and which was later granted a one-third ownership on the project. Many of those who, during the Berger Inquiry, were major opponents of the pipeline, such as Stephen Kakfwi (Sahtu Dene), Frank T'Seleie (Sahtu Dene) and Nellie Cournoyea (Inuvialuit) were now among the founders of the APG, together with Gwich'in leader Fred Carmichael. At the JRP hearings in Fort Good Hope (2006), both Stephen Kakfwi and Frank T'Seleie spoke about the possibility of a pipeline through the Sahtu region, stressing the necessity of guaranteeing shared revenues, if the project was to proceed with the Sahtu Dene's approval. In their interventions, the two leaders sounded much more cautious and well-disposed towards the project in comparison both to their past stances at the Berger Inquiry and to the testimonies of many other Dene, who, as I have illustrated so far, were still manifesting their skepticism and concern over the project.

For this reason, while much of my analytical attention has been so far directed towards the hearings held in Sahtu Dene communities (particularly those of Fort Good Hope and Delíne), from which a general lack of trust and support towards the MVP has consistently emerged, I will now conclude my analysis by examining the testimonies of two major supporters of the pipeline as well as former Chairs of the APG, namely Nellie Cournoyea from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Fred Carmichael from the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

> The Inuvialuit have recognized that challenge walks hand in hand with opportunity. Our ability to thrive within a physical and social environment that may dramatically and permanently change is not something that is new to us. The Inuvialuit are a progressive people who clearly recognize that change is an inevitable component in our lives. Our past is our heritage, and while we learn and gain strength from it, we do not remain there. The key to our continued success as a proud and progressive people is our ability to manage change, assess the impacts of change and address them in a manner that enhances our capacity to meet the challenges yet to come. The project that is now before us has been anticipated by the Inuvialuit for over 30 years.
> -Nellie Cournoyea (Opening Statement)[143]

[142] The Dehcho - a group of individual Dene and Métis communities spread through the Northwest Territories - were not part of the APG. Although 40% of the proposed pipeline would cover their territory, they were not invited as participants based on the fact that they had not concluded any land-claim agreement, and thus did not have any formal jurisdiction over the land.
[143] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 14 February 2006, Vol. 1, 10, 37-43; 11, 1-5.

> Through our united effort, we became partners in one of Canada's largest projects, which will benefit Aboriginal people for generations to come (…) And I think the fact that the Aboriginal people are a partner in this project and the fact that I'm at this table representing Aboriginal people tells you how far we've come in that 30 years.
> -Fred Carmichael (Opening Statement)[144]

> Let me just say that we Aboriginal people have taken care of our land, our environment, our animals, and ourselves for thousands of years, and I think we have done a pretty good job (…) Mr. Chairman, Panel Members, please let us, the people of the North, decide what is best for our land, our environment, and our people. We are ready for this project.
> -Fred Carmichael (Closing Remarks)[145]

Besides their firm support of the project, Nellie Cournoyea's and Fred Carmichael's speeches are underpinned by the same efforts to persuade the audience to trust the decision-making skills of their people. Looking at the choice of words here can be thus particularly revelatory of the speakers' intentions.

In the short extract from her opening statement, Nellie Cournoyea emphasizes Inuvialuit's ability to effectively anticipate and manage change. In this sense, we can notice a recurrence of words with a similar meaning - what Fairclough (1989, p. 96) calls *overwording* - such as 'ability', 'manage', 'success' and 'capacity'. The Inuvialuit are presented as self-conscious and empowered people - in Cournoyea's words, 'proud and progressive' - who have learnt to cope with challenging situations and even to get the best out of them. For this reason, a word like 'change', to which a negative expressive value is apparently attached ('*dramatically* and *permanently* change'), is quickly reversed and transformed not only into a natural phenomenon ('change is an inevitable component in our lives'), but into a 'challenge' and an 'opportunity'. As such, change becomes something one can eventually benefit from - as suggested by the use of words with positive value, such as 'to thrive', 'learn and gain strength' and 'enhances'.

[144] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 15 February 2006, Vol. 2, 67, 30-31; 68, 28-30.
[145] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 28 November, 2007, Vol. 114, 11417, 24-26; 32-34.

Regarding the aspect of *agency,* Nellie Cournoyea often shifts the subject of her sentences, by either referring to the 'Inuvialuit', i.e. to the broader collectivity she politically represents, or to 'we', thus directly including herself as a member of the group, in the attempt of establishing a higher degree of closeness. Differently from Cournoyea, Fred Carmichael, while also mentioning the Gwich'in in other parts of his statements, makes often reference to wider collectivities, namely 'the Aboriginal people' and 'the people of the North'. In the same way as the Inuvialuit leader, he also situates himself as part of this group ('*we* Aboriginal people'), and furthermore, as its spokesperson ('*I'm* at this table *representing* Aboriginal people'). Just as Nellie Cournoyea, Carmichael wants to stress that aboriginal people of the North deserve the trust and support of government and industry, having proven capable of preparedness, management and resilience. By means of different tenses, Carmichael skillfully builds up a narrative of continuity ('we Aboriginal people *have taken care* of our land, our environment, our animals, and ourselves *for thousands of years*) and development ('Aboriginal people *are* a partner in this project'; '*I'm* at this table representing Aboriginal people'; '*how far we've come in that 30 years*'), which highlights aboriginal achievements, and provides the latter with the status of 'facts'. In the same way, Carmichael's use of the auxiliary 'will' with reference to the future impacts of the pipeline ('*will* benefit Aboriginal people') can be interpreted as a way of asserting certainty, and of establishing his position as an authoritative source of knowledge. In this regard, he motivates his support to the MVP project, by endowing the latter with the ability to guarantee and promote the interests of his people not only in the short-term, but on a much more extended temporal scale ('for generations to come').

Discussion: we have always been anticipating

The history of the relations between the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in of Western Arctic is one punctuated by moments of conflict - especially with regard to the aspect of land-use - and cooperation. After the Berger Inquiry, both the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in concluded land-claim agreements with the federal government, namely the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) in 1984 which created the Inuvialuit Settlement Region[146] , and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim

[146] The region, which covers 435,000 square kilometers, of which approx. 90,600 square kilometers of land, includes parts of Yukon and Northwest Territories and the westernmost part of the Canadian Archipelago. The main towns are Aklavik, Inuvik (the most densely populated), Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok.

Agreement (GCLCA) in 1992 which established the Gwich'in Settlement Area[147]. In 1993, the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in of the NWT started a joint negotiation with the Government of Canada and the government of the NWT to conclude a Self-Government Agreement for the Beaufort-Delta region. After ten years, the two parties signed together, in 2003, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement in Principle for the Beaufort-Delta Region [148], although eventually pursuing separate paths (Zellen, 2008).

Nellie Cournoyea was one of the main negotiators of the Inuvialuit land claims throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and even participated in the parallel hearings held by the NEB during the Berger Inquiry[149]. Her political career continued in the years ahead, where she held the position of Premier of the NWT (1991-1995), and of Chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (1995-2016), one of the organisms created by the IFA. Similarly, Fred Carmichael was, at the time of the JRP hearings, Grand Chief of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, an indigenous organization established within the GCLCA and representing the interests of Gwich'in participants in the Mackenzie Delta and across Canada. Cournoyea and Carmichael share a past - and present - of political mobilization, and for this reason, it should not come as a surprise that their speeches at the JRP hearings are, under many aspects, very similar.

First of all, both Cournoyea and Carmichael skillfully shape multiple several temporal scales in their speeches and strategically use them in order to support their argument.

In the opening statement of Nellie Cournoyea, the *past* is referred to as 'heritage', i.e. as an essential part of people's personal and collective histories, which is nevertheless endowed with an "instrumental" character for the achievement of future goals ('we learn and gain strength from it, we do not remain there'). Against nostalgic evocations of the past as something irremediably lost or to go back to, Cournoyea advances a more forward-looking perspective, which conceives the past as a departure point, rather than as a point of reference or as a

[147] The area is comprised of approx. 57,000 square kilometers, and includes parts of Yukon and Northwest Territories. The main communities are those of Inuvik, Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic.
[148] The text of the Agreement is available from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032131/1100100032213 [Accessed 5 June 2018].
[149] Cournoyea testified as the director of the COPE. Source: Polar Library, Copenhagen. NEB, Exhibit N-68-2, Prepared Evidence of Nellie Cournoyea - "Social Impact" - phase 3, 19 August 1976.

"haunting" presence. It results that the Inuvialuit are described as both 'proud' and 'progressive' people, i.e. proud of their history, but constantly moving forward.

In his opening statement, Fred Carmichael also refers to the past and, as other aboriginal participants before him, understands the latter as covering a very broad temporal scale. The past, rather than being a collection of specific events, is one dating back thousands of years, and with which the present has to be seen is in direct continuation. By emphasizing the continuity between past and present, Carmichael strategically mobilizes time to provide concrete evidence of aboriginal skills such as self-management, environmental care and, most of all, *resilience* ('we Aboriginal people have taken care of our land, our environment, our animals, and ourselves for thousands of years').

Finally, both Cournoyea and Carmichael evoke another past dimension, what I have previously referred to as the 'meantime'. The timespan of the meantime is here set to the thirty years between the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings. These years are recalled by the speakers as fundamental years, filled with preparatory activities ('the project that is now before us has been anticipated by the Inuvialuit for over 30 years'), and with groundbreaking achievements ('the fact that the Aboriginal people are a partner in this project and the fact that I'm at this table representing Aboriginal people tells you how far we've come in that 30 years').

It results that for Cournoyea and Carmichael, the *present* is thus understood in two ways: 1) as the here and now of the JRP hearings and 2) as being uniquely defined by the future, and thus prompting the constant enactment of anticipatory practices. In the first understanding, the present is the culmination and result of the anticipatory efforts and the work carried out over the past thirty years, and thus, constitutes an achievement in itself ('how far we've come'). In the second understanding, the present, although regarded as a fundamental moment of planning and action, is also perceived as inherently precarious and subject to change. As Cournoyea points out when she states 'change is an inevitable component in our lives'[150], the Inuvialuit's strength lies in their ability to cope with transitory realities, and to anticipate future change. While anticipatory regimes are often considered externally imposed, and anticipation seen as a subtle way of organizing and directing action in this present towards specific goals (Adams et al., 2009;

[150] Cournoyea's remarks remind Sam Raddi's testimony at the Berger Inquiry, where, with reference to the unpredictability of hunting and trapping, he stated 'every day was never the same. One day weather is really good; next day the going is hard' (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 28 January, 1976, Vol. 36, 3458, 29-30).

Weszkalnys, 2014), in this case, anticipation is configured as a temporal and affective disposition, which the Inuvialuit have internalized and mastered throughout centuries of practice.

In light of these considerations, I argue that Cournoyea and Carmichael's similar engagements with time are particularly relevant in terms of what *argument* they support. Looking at the three speeches, it becomes increasingly clear that Cournoyea's and Carmichael's interventions are aimed at promoting a specific picture of the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in as empowered and resilient aboriginal subjects. The references to time are thus used in order to track and celebrate aboriginal achievements over the previous decades, as well as to emphasize the long-lasting and enduring character of some aboriginal skills, such as anticipation and care for the environment. Nellie Cournoyea, in particular, seems to want to offer an image of the Inuvialuit in direct opposition to stereotypical representations of Northern aboriginal people as "lazy", "incompetent" and "stuck in the past". For this reason, she feels the urge to underline that while the past is an important part of Inuvialuit life, the Inuvialuit 'do not remain there' and are instead constantly oriented towards the future.

It is also interesting to notice that Cournoyea's vocabulary seems to be adhering to the register and style typical of her interlocutors, as exemplified by the following extract: 'our ability to manage change, assess the impacts of change and address them in a manner that enhances our capacity to meet the challenges yet to come'. The use of terms such as 'manage', 'assess the impacts' and 'capacity', besides reminding the terminology of official documents, can be seen as a way to establish a closer connection with her audience of regulators and corporate representatives (Mitchell, 1996; Zellen, 2008). In a similar fashion, in both Fred Carmichael's speeches, it is possible to trace a succession of positive statements ('we became partners in one of Canada's largest projects'; 'I'm at this table representing Aboriginal people'; 'we have done a pretty good job'), which contribute to constructing an image of competent, successful and self-confident Northerner. The "branding" efforts put into practice by Cournoyea and Carmichael are, as I see them, aimed at persuading the Canadian government and petroleum industry of the legitimacy and usefulness of aboriginal participation in the Mackenzie Gas Project. At the time of the hearings, both the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit had key economic interests in the project through the APG, and were still in the process of negotiating a delicate and long-desired self-

government agreement. For this reason, the speeches of Nellie Cournoyea and Fred Carmichael diverge from the opposition and skepticism emerging from other aboriginal testimonies, and attempt to offer instead a common image of their own communities as reliable, goal-oriented and resilient actors, besides, of course, as firm supporters of the project. The way they do so, as I have illustrated in this analysis, is by unfolding a powerful (and this time, specifically aboriginal) temporal politics of anticipation and readiness in direct opposition to the ones of reaction, hesitation and waiting (Janeja and Bandak, 2018) evoked in the testimonies of other witnesses.

In spite of their reassurances to the JRP regarding the general consensus on the pipeline among the Mackenzie Delta residents[151], both Cournoyea and Carmichael are aware of the risks posed by the persistent resistance and contestation of many communities[152]. For this reason, their testimonies should be seen as attempts not only to strategically mobilize, but to *accelerate* time ('we are ready for this project'), also at the cost of excluding dissenting voices.

7.8. Conclusions: pipeline memories, pipeline futures, pipeline people

The JRP hearings are to be situated in a political and institutional context directly resulting from the process of land claim settlements developing in the NWT between the 1970s and the early 2000s, and still ongoing today. Besides shaping the new geographies of aboriginal ownership and jurisdiction, this process brought to the North a complex body of policies, programs and procedures meant to regulate government-aboriginal relations. As an integral part of the newly established framework of aboriginal consultation, the JRP hearings are then not only expression of the political and legal transformations taking place in the North of Canada in the thirty years after the Berger Inquiry, but are also expression of a very different spatial and temporal framing than the one previously set up by the Inquiry. As it has emerged from my analysis, this particular framing, by privileging unfamiliar spaces of consultation and a rather rigid time schedule, has been perceived by many of the Dene participants at the JRP hearings as deeply constraining, and potentially, as leading to unfruitful discussions. Nevertheless, in spite of the intrinsic limitations

[151] In his closing remarks, Carmichael states 'today the majority of Aboriginal people and northerners are supporting and want this project'.

[152] In 2004, the Deh Cho filed a lawsuit against the decision of the Minister of the Environment to appoint a Joint Review Panel without their participation. Nellie Cournoyea reacted by criticizing the Dehcho, and, in October 2004, said in Inuvik: 'They have no right to be impeding our development' (Natural Gas Intelligence, 11 October, 2004). Although eventually the Dehcho reached a settlement agreement in 2005 with the Government of Canada, they maintained their opposition to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, motivating it with the unsettled land-claim.

carried by this new arena of negotiation, Northern residents have sought (and, as I believe, succeeded) to transform the latter into a space of appearance, where to articulate their concerns, raise awareness on long-standing issues, and attempt to persuade the audience on the feasibility or unfeasibility of the pipeline.

Once again, as already happened during the Berger Inquiry, fundamental questions of ownership, governance and development have been often addressed by the speakers. In continuation with the previous chapter, I have examined these questions as fundamental questions of space and time, and I have thus directed my analysis towards exploring how participants produce and inhabit different spatial and temporal scales, and how, by doing so, aim to achieve specific political goals ("spatio-temporal politics").

In this sense, I have noticed how the 'land' is still a recurrent theme of Dene testimonies, where participants both stress their attachment to the land, and, at the same time, denounce the rapid changes which threaten to compromise this moral relationship (Basso, 1992, p. 134). While, similar to the testimonies presented at the Berger Inquiry, many speakers configure capital ('money') as something alien to the land, and identify it as the main cause of the social issues afflicting the communities, others - such as, for example, Dene leaders Stephen Kakfwi and Frank T'Seleie - attempt to rethink the role of 'money' in the Dene-land relationship, and to imbue it with a fundamental positive value for the community's wellbeing. Rather than keeping money *out of* the land, as urged by other witnesses, Kakfwi and T'Seleie agree on the necessity of making money *from* the land in order to break the cycle of dependence on government and industry benefits. The spatiality of the land is thus, once again, a very fluid one imbued with different memories, visions and interests, all of which contribute to making the 'land' both a source and a space of power.

As much as during the Berger Inquiry, at the JRP hearings, space-making is strictly linked to time-making. Together with space, time is mobilized as a means to shape conduct and to direct action toward particular goals and priorities, while neglecting others. In some of the testimonies examined, the Sahtu complain that, over the years, specific temporal regimes have been imposed on them - one of these being 'reaction'. These temporal regimes have not only constantly urged the Sahtu to take quick decisions without reflecting on the consequences, but have eventually

generated among the community members an overwhelming sense of immobility and 'stuckedness'. The extremely hectic and time-consuming process of negotiating the MVP is in fact identified by the speakers as the cause of the persistent lack of a collective "spatio-temporal awareness", a lack which affects both their present (where they are now) and their future (where they are going).

Indeed, histories and visions of the past and future constantly materialize in the testimonies, and are used to bring the present into consciousness (Bryant, 2016), by encouraging different kinds of *readiness*. In this regard, while the past of failed aboriginal inclusion is recalled as a warning in order to prepare for a future of equal disappointment, the past of aboriginal mobilization and continued adaptability to change is evoked not only as a proof of competence, but as a way to accelerate a future development which risks to be furtherly slowed down.

The past is, as I have noticed, also that of the Berger Inquiry, which returns in several testimonies as a pivotal moment in Northern aboriginal history. In here, many of the changes experienced today were predicted. Yet, what the memories of several witnesses seem mostly to focus on is a very different 'way of talking' than the one experienced today (Dokis, 2015). While the pipeline was obviously a major concern already back then, the Inquiry was also the opportunity to introduce different images, stories and practices which often did not have so much to do with the pipeline itself, but which were part of a wider process aimed at asserting aboriginal rights and decision-making power. Thirty years later, much has changed also in the sense that the same testimonies now produce very different narratives. The memories, the experiences and the visions gathered at the JRP hearings are suddenly all informed by an overarching focus on the *pipeline*, regardless whether the latter is configured as an opportunity or as an obstacle. As I observe, this fundamental shift has also resulted into a very different subject position emerging from the two rounds of hearings. During the Berger Inquiry, the people of the Mackenzie Delta were, more or less consciously, part of a wider process of political mobilization, encouraged and guided by regional and international organizations. The Dene Nation, the COPE, the ITC, and a worldwide growing indigenous movement, made it possible for the participants at the Inquiry to be more than 'Indians' and 'Eskimos' and rather, 'Dene' and 'Inuit', not only 'frontier people', but 'indigenous people'. While these identities are still relevant, I argue that a new one has slowly emerged as a direct result of the transformations

taking place *in the meantime*, i.e. between the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings. In this very different space-time, where the past is inevitably remembered through the lens of other Northern extractive projects, and where the future is bound to be one of further (extr)activism and development, the people from the Mackenzie Delta have now become "pipeline people", and thus, fundamental actors of the petro-nation.

Conclusions.

Energy encounters: articulating an aboriginal spatio-temporal politics

Over the last fifty years, the process of energy development across the Canadian North has undoubtedly produced massive transformations, affecting the lives of both those proximate to and distant from prospected facilities. To look at these transformations through a *spatial* perspective has meant for me to explore the complex and not always explicit relations among people, places and events, and while doing so, to unravel the inherent *political* dimensions and implications of newly emerging 'energy geographies'. In this regard, in the Introduction to this work, I have used the term 'spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development' to describe the ways in which space and time are understood, configured and managed in the context of hydrocarbon exploration and extraction, in order to legitimate, actively encourage or preclude certain political, social and economic transformations.

Throughout this work, I have examined some of the ways in which the spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development has been articulated in Canada and in the North especially, over the years. In this regard, I have showed how from the 1950s, both government and petroleum industry have increasingly attempted to promote resource extraction as part of a collective history and thus, as a fundamental nation-building opportunity. A key characteristic of this deeply nationalist agenda, I have argued, has been the imagination and subsequent territorial configuration of Canada as a national space of connection, (extr)activism and shifting opportunity. Such national space is a bordered one, crossed by imaginary lines which, although differently termed, whenever (and wherever) resources and opportunities for development have been identified, have been called 'frontiers'. While frontiers constantly emerge and disappear, in the context of Canadian oil and gas development, the Northwest of the country has been

persistently imagined and represented as an 'energy frontier'. In the attempt to unravel the deep entanglement between space and technology, I have focused on the role of maps in supporting and actively maintaining the representation of the Northwest energy frontier. Although maps' political significance is widely acknowledged, I have nevertheless found very productive to examine resource and thematic maps of the North in order to expose the subtle ways in which cartography suggests certain understandings of the world, and, by envisioning possible futures, also legitimizes specific actions in the present.

In this regard, it is worth to notice how not only different spaces, but also temporalities - i.e. ways of experiencing, perceiving and scaling time - emerge throughout the process of Canadian oil and gas development, including 'waiting', 'rush', 'anticipation' and 'reaction'. Each of these temporalities is deeply embedded in politics, as it is evoked in order to stop, slow down or accelerate development, and to include or exclude certain actors - such as aboriginal peoples - from the latter.

In the context of my case study, the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, I have identified one major expression of the spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development in the JRP hearings held between 2006 and 2007 across Northern communities. As a newly created space of consultation directly emerging from the institutional and political transformations taking place in the North after the Berger Inquiry (1974-1977), the hearings are characterized by rigid time schedules and unfamiliar settings. Differently from the Berger Inquiry, in here, participants are in fact remembered to constantly moderate their speech paces, to rephrase their interventions, and to fit their testimonies into the assigned timeslot. The result is a 'bureaucratic space-time' (Nadasdy, 2017), which cannot but cause frustration and distrust in many of those who encounter within it. At the same time, as I have reiterated many times throughout this work, I consider the MVP community hearings a uniquely informative setting. In fact, in spite of their more or less constraining framework, the hearings are also a space of encounter, where the spatio-temporal politics of oil and gas development and its impacts on aboriginal practices, narratives and relations are nevertheless vividly exposed and denounced.

While this is definitely true, I would like to conclude by arguing that the spatio-temporal politics is not only the one exposed by aboriginal participants *through* the hearings, but also the one

which aboriginal participants progressively construct and articulate *within* the latter, namely, what I have identified as an 'aboriginal spatio-temporal politics'. My analysis has shown that aboriginal witnesses constantly and diversely engage with issues of space and time through their testimonies. These engagements, I conclude here, can be seen as directly linked to or even constituting themselves political claims. Specifically, aboriginal participants at the hearings articulate their own spatio-temporal politics, in the sense that:

1) They use questions of space and time in order to frame specific claims, i.e. as *political arguments*. By emphasizing their unique relationship with the land or by evoking the dramatic memory of colonization or of failed inclusion in other development projects, the Dene are actively mobilizing space and time to argue for the right to self-determination, and to question Canadian authority and decision-making power in the North;

2) In addition, aboriginal participants consistently configure questions of space and time as much more than frameworks of broader political and historical claims, and rather, as *objects of negotiation* themselves. What is eventually at stake, in fact, is not only the construction of the pipeline or the signing of the land-claim agreements, but specific spatialities (such as the 'Dene nation'), and, quoting Haines (2018, p. 408), 'the rights and capacities to influence the present and the future'. In this regard, previously quoted Addy Tabac, a Dene resident of Fort Good Hope, in her testimony presented at the JRP hearings, denounced that '[the Dene] were not given the time and space'[153]. What her words hint at, as I suggest, is that the Dene are actually claiming the *right to scale*, i.e. the right to shape their own space and time, to be 'future makers' rather than 'future takers', and accordingly, to decide the form, extent and pace of any development to come.

Not there, not yet, no longer.

I have started this thesis with a reflection on 'absence', where I suggested that the latter deeply informs different people's experiences, perceptions and aspirations, especially in the context of resource extraction. Throughout my study of Canadian oil and gas development, I have focused specifically on the spatial and temporal dimensions of absence, i.e. on those objects (e.g. rights,

[153] JRP Hearing Transcripts, 12 April 2006, vol. 23, p. 2163, 10.

information, recognition, etc.) and forms (e.g. loss, omission and gap) of missing which are spatially and temporally defined and configured, and which I have referred to as the 'not there' and the 'not yet'. In this regard, I have observed how the different stories on oil and gas exploration - what I have termed "petro-narratives" - all somehow share a certain promissory quality, in the sense that they all envision a future, whether of sovereignty, prosperity or environmental leadership, which is not there yet, but is indeed felt ready to be achieved. Similarly, I have argued that spatial imaginaries such as the Northwest 'energy frontier' have been actively reinforced and maintained by government and industry through maps, which, thanks to their visual and narrative power, have managed to turn the 'not there' - i.e. what would otherwise be mere representation - into a reality. The constant state of waiting and expectation generated by untapped resources and unbuilt infrastructures can indeed be seen as one of the main requirements for the discursive maintenance of the petro-nation, which deeply relies on absences as much as on presences. Finally, shifting the focus on my case study, the mobilization of Northern aboriginal people against the construction of the MVP in the 1970s can also be seen as inspired by a wish to close the gap in indigenous consultation and participation in infrastructural development, and to do so before the *not-there-yet* - i.e. the pipeline - becomes a *here* and *now.*

These are indeed some of the ways in which, as it emerges from my study, the 'not there' and the 'not yet' are constructed, evoked and experienced in the context of Canadian oil and gas development. However, through my analysis of the Dene testimonies presented at the Berger Inquiry and the JRP hearings, I have progressively traced one more spatio-temporal dimension of absence which I want to finally discuss here, namely what I will call the 'no longer'.

According to Aristotle (trans. 1957, p.373), time is inherently characterized by absence, in the sense that 'some of it is past and no longer exists and the rest is future and does not yet exist'. Far from negating the essence of the present, what Aristotle wants to point out is that because there will always be a 'no longer' (past) and a 'not yet' (future), so there will also always be a 'now', as a measure of the changes happening between the past and the future. One might say then that, in this perspective, the present acquires a specific significance, being the moment in which both the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' are perceived, evoked, and thus fully acknowledged.

Yet, while the 'no longer' is mostly understood here as a temporal dimension - i.e. what was and no longer is *in time* - I argue that it has a spatial connotation as well, insofar as it also refers to what was and no longer is *in space.*

My analysis of the Berger Inquiry shows that the spatially-significant 'no longer' is mobilized by Dene participants through the memories of land dispossession and of forced relocation from the familiar spaces of the 'bush' and the 'valley' to the alien spaces of the 'town' and the 'school'. While the same memories insistently return thirty years later, during the JRP hearings, other memories are also gathered by many witnesses who recall, often with a deep sense of nostalgia, moments from the Berger Inquiry. In contrast with the current setting, the Berger Inquiry is remembered as a safe, welcoming and empowering space of consultation, where men and women of all ages were encouraged to tell their stories, and where another future was indeed thought to be possible. In both cases, whether through the painful memory of the loss - or, more precisely, of the deprivation - of familiar spaces or through the nostalgic memory of more hopeful and animated times, the evocation of the 'no longer' introduces a reflection on 'what was and no longer is', and on the enduring consequences of past, present and future change.

At the same time, while the 'no longer' as a spatio-temporal dimension is mostly framed within a past-present dynamics - to no longer be there is something which was there (physically or emotionally) in the past and which no longer is today - I would like to suggest a second way of understanding and experiencing the 'no longer', which I have drawn from the Maori term *kua kore*. According to the online version of the Maori dictionary (2011), *kua kore* can be used either to express (1) 'the loss, absence, destruction or departure of something' or (2) '[what] will not now be, will no longer, not anymore, won't be'. I want to draw the reader's attention on this second connotation given to the term, and point out how 'no longer' and 'not anymore' are here placed next to each other as synonyms. In connection with my previous considerations on the 'no longer' as a specific configuration of the present in terms of absence of the past ('what was and no longer is'), the 'no longer' is here used to envision a future absence without any explicit link to a past existence, i.e. 'what never was and will not be'. Of course, one might say that for something not to be *anymore* in the future, it also had to exist - even just in the realm of imagination - before. While this is definitely true, through the example of the MVP, I want to

encourage a reflection on the awareness of enduring absence and on the possibilities created by something which is indeed not going to happen.

In December 2017, Imperial Oil posted a press release on its website announcing that the joint-venture partnership behind the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline had been officially cancelled. This news, while obviously disappointing many of the long-standing supporters of the project, did not catch by surprise those who had already foreseen a similar conclusion several years before. In this regard, in an article of the Calgary Herald published on November 17, 2007, few days before the end of the JRP hearings in Inuvik (NWT), Kurt Wainman, an Inuvialuk truck driver from Inuvik, said to the interviewer asking him about the long-delayed pipeline: 'If I was getting ready, I'd be wasting my time (…) It's hard to get ready for something if it isn't going to come' (quoted in Schmidt, 2007).

During the JRP hearings, many participants voiced their frustration over the changes which had been taking place in the North over the past thirty years, and, by exposing social, political and economic deficiencies in the NWT, configured the present as a time of lost opportunity, regrets and unrealized potential. While these testimonies engage with the 'no longer' by dwelling on *what could have been and no longer will*, Kurt Wainman's words, as in the case of those Dene testimonies urging to be prepared for disappointment, engage with the no longer by acknowledging that *what never was will never be.* Rather than mere skepticism, disappointment or disillusionment, Wainman expresses a much deeper awareness that not only derives from the pipeline's prolonged absence through the past and the present, but which extends to foreseeing a similarly permanent absence in the future.

The different affective and political responses triggered by such awareness, especially among aboriginal communities living in the Mackenzie Valley, are definitely worth further investigation, and might provide an interesting direction for future research. However, due to the limited space and time I have left here, I would like to conclude by suggesting that to be aware of and to acknowledge the pipeline's enduring absence might ultimately have a *transformative* potential, as it entails to see infrastructural absence not only (or not necessarily) in terms of loss or gap, but in terms of the multiple 'presences' triggered, unfolded and perhaps, even "enabled" by this absence.

Since its early proposals, the MVP has been perceived by both its supporters and opponents as an overwhelming presence, in spite of its concrete absence. This realization has sparked a huge reaction among Northern aboriginal communities, who, throughout the Berger Inquiry and in the years following the latter, have increasingly organized themselves politically, and ultimately emerged as fundamental actors of energy development, and thus, of the petro-nation. As I have already pointed out, the Berger Inquiry itself should be considered as a unique moment of appearance and negotiation, where young and old community members were given the opportunity to strategically articulate their requests and concerns. The forced absence of the MVP through a ten-year moratorium allowed indeed the settlement of several land claims throughout the North. In spite of their intrinsic limitations, these agreements also made signatory aboriginal groups acquire some degree of responsibility for subsurface rights and royalty regimes. Furthermore, the creation of organizations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council[154] (1977) and the Arctic Council (1996), whose work has often focused on issues of resource exploitation and community participation, can be seen as resulting from the efforts of Northern indigenous peoples towards establishing broader platforms of discussion and exchange. Against the more popular portrayal of indigenous people as victims or mere recipients of change, one can then also point out at a profound resurgence of aboriginal communities in Canada, which in the recent years, has been powerfully symbolized by the 'Idle No More', a grassroots movement founded in 2012 to protest the Bill C-45, a budget implementation bill threatening to undermine environmental protection and indigenous rights to land and resources. Differently from the other uses of the term suggested so far, 'No More' (as 'no longer') is here infused with a deeply proactive connotation, which is reflected in the movement's efforts to assert indigenous sovereignty and land rights.

Of course, looking at the MVP and at many other proposed pipelines across Canada[155], one might say that much is still left to be done in terms of indigenous participation in development projects.

[154] Canadian international relations scholar Jessica Shadian (2014, p. 91) writes about the Inuit Circupolar Council that 'in many ways, the ICC was born from these "politics of oil", and the founding of the ICC became an historical event among many that transformed the relationship between the Inuit and their land and resources'.
[155] Among these, the extension to the Trans-Mountain Pipeline, carrying diluted bitumen from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia; the Enbridge Line 3, carrying oil sands crude oil from Hardisty, Alberta to Superior, Wisconsin and the Keystone XL carrying crude oil from Hardisty, Alberta to Steele City, Nebraska.

However, what I have attempted to point out here is that indigenous political awareness and mobilization, regardless of its concrete achievements, should be seen as one of the multiple 'presences' that can be prompted or simply "uncovered" by megaprojects' 'historical/contemporary absence and anticipated future presence' (Haines, 2018, p. 407). Finally, besides what *has been made possible* due to the pipeline's absence, the end of the Mackenzie Gas Project prompts a similar reflection on what *will be made possible* now that the MVP is not going to be built. In this sense, to acknowledge the (permanent) absence of a proposed infrastructure can indeed open up for a discussion on alternative development paths - a discussion which is extremely relevant not only in Canada, but also in other parts of the Arctic, such as Greenland, where local expectations and ideas of future (Wormbs, 2018) have been affected by extractive projects that did not happen (Wilson et al., 2017) or resources that were never found or extracted.

In this perspective, what the Mackenzie Valley pipeline ultimately leaves behind is not only a lingering shadow, but also an open space, where multiple opportunities can be generated, and where the 'no longer' can make space for many other 'not yet'.

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Hearing transcripts:

All the transcripts of the Berger Inquiry have been retrieved in the online archives of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Yellowknife, NWT). Available from: https://www.pwnhc.ca/exhibitions/berger/documentation/#tab-id-2

All the transcripts of the JRP Hearings have been directly collected in April 2017 at the Library of the National Energy Board, Suite 210, 517 Tenth Avenue SW Calgary, Alberta T2R 0A8.

References to the specific transcripts are contained in the footnotes throughout the text.